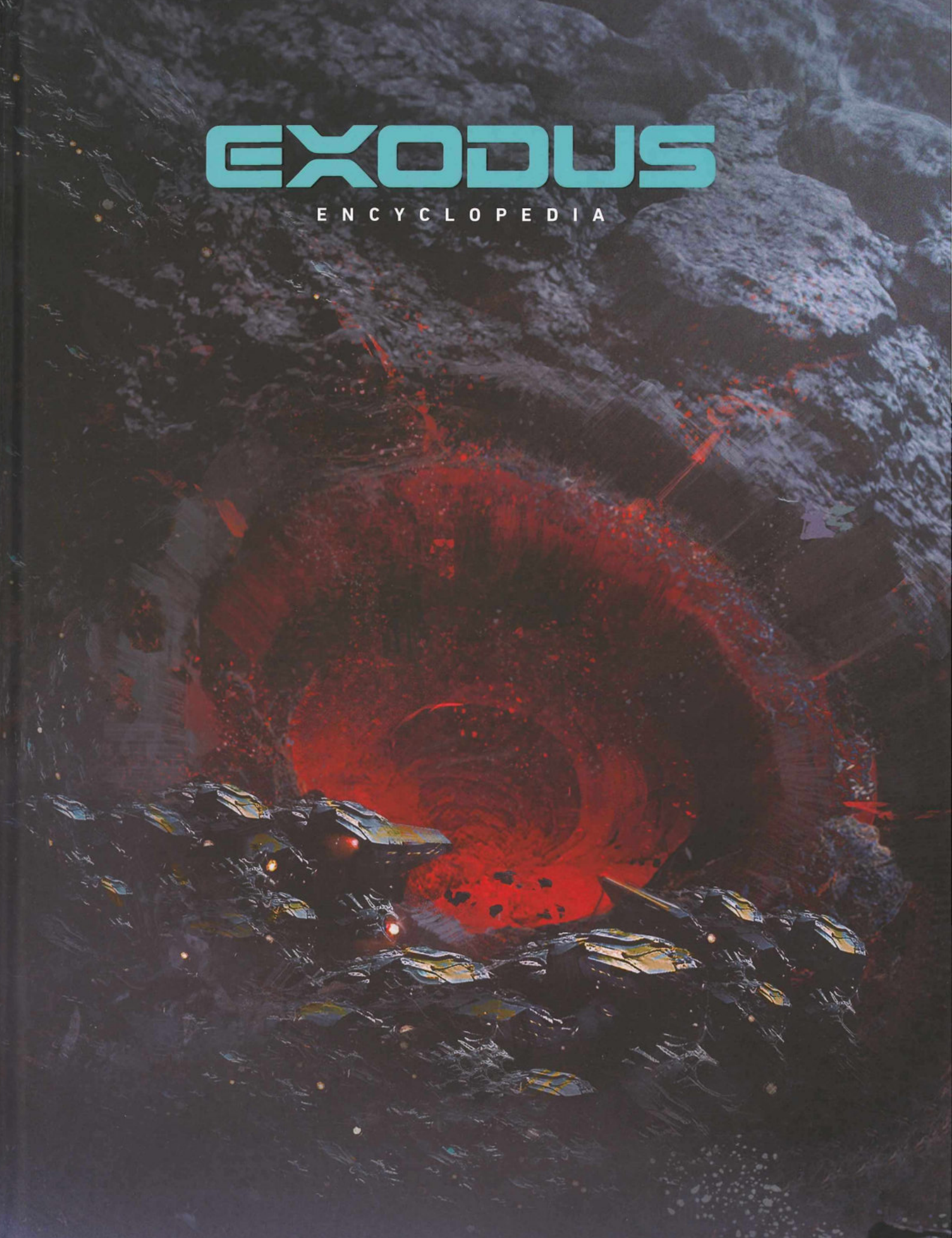


EXODUS

ENCYCLOPEDIA



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Special Thanks to:

The Archetype team, Chris Cocks (for having
patience and writing the Traveler's Creed),
Dean Andersen, and Debysue Wolfcale.

Additional Thanks to:

For our amazing keyart, we thank James Ohlen
and the creative visionaries at Aaron Sims Creative.
In addition, we are grateful for the creative partnership
of the talented team at Create 8 Studio.

EXODUS ENCYCLOPEDIA

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Ages 17+

Printed in Shenzhen, China

First Edition – First Printing

Date of Manufacture: May 2025

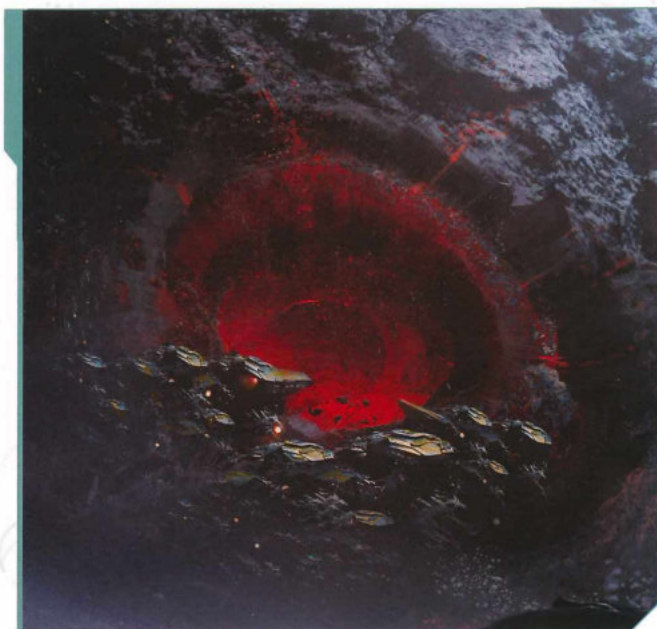
EU Distributor: WAYPOINT, Servečės g. 1, Vilnius, 02121, Lithuania

EXODUS

/ˈeksədəs/

Noun. From Ancient Greek ἐξοδος.

1. A departure; literal or metaphorical.
2. A movement of people from one place to another.
3. A time-dilated interstellar journey during which the traveler experiences velocities approaching lightspeed. Popularized during the 23rd century mass exodus from Earth.
4. The exact moment of accelerated transit through the Gates of Heaven.



On the Cover

Special thanks to Juan Pablo Rodan for this illustration showcasing the moment numerous starships approach a mysterious anomaly adrift in the vastness of the EXODUS universe.



Stay tuned to the latest reveals in the world of EXODUS by visiting ExoduseGame.com to be one of the first to find out about the latest news as we share a deeper look at this world and its unique history.

Published by Archetype Entertainment (an imprint of Wizards of the Coast LLC)
Archetype Entertainment
11902 Burnet Rd, Ste 200
Austin, TX 78758, USA

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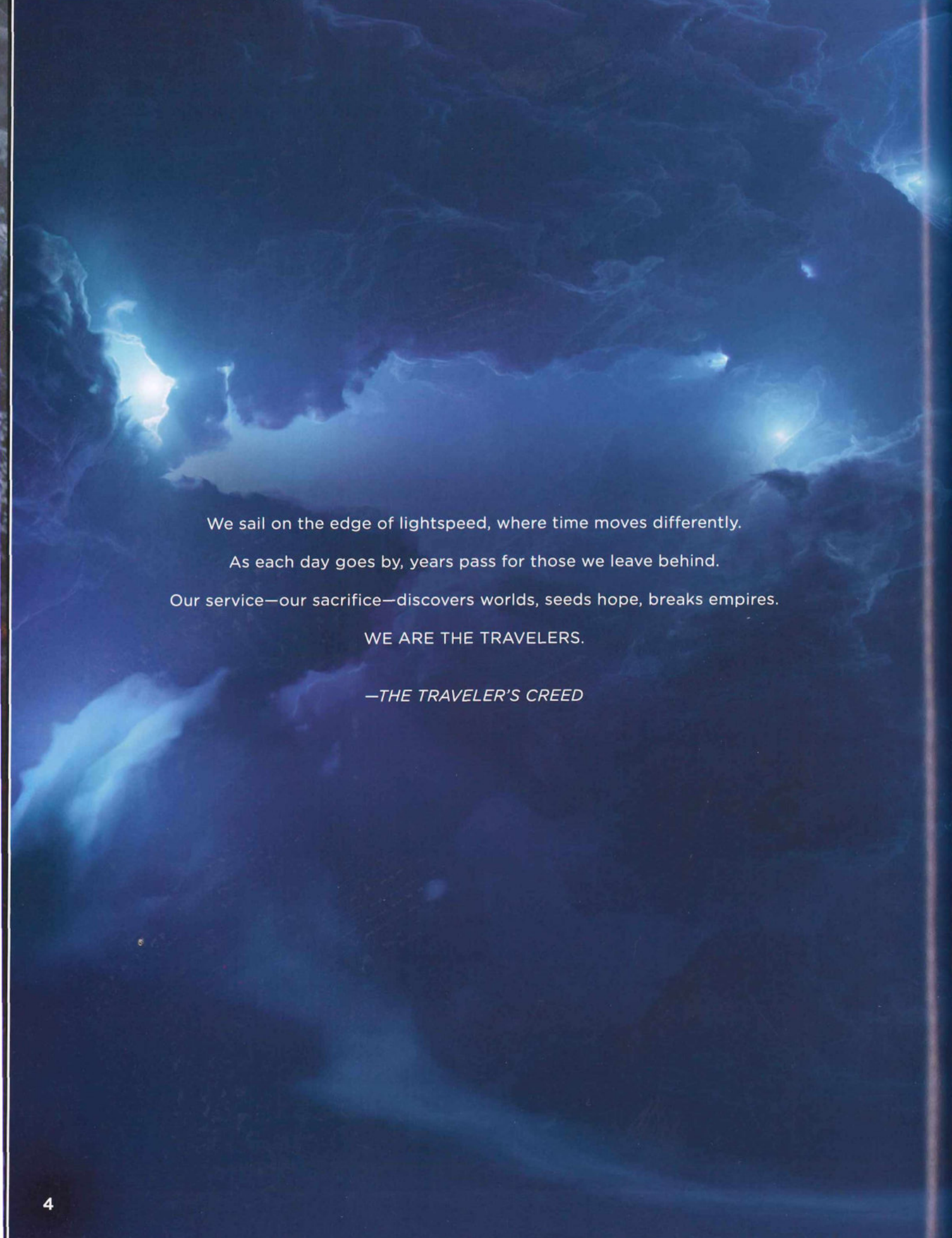
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We sail on the edge of lightspeed, where time moves differently.
As each day goes by, years pass for those we leave behind.
Our service—our sacrifice—discovers worlds, seeds hope, breaks empires.

WE ARE THE TRAVELERS.

—THE TRAVELER'S CREED

INTRODUCTION



This world, this solar system. It's all you've known. You lived your whole life beneath the same sun, under the same gravity. Or maybe you traveled to a neighboring world, a moon or two. And your people, they lived their whole lives here, too. Your parents, their parents. All the way back to the arkships that brought your ancestors from Earth. Were they crew? Passengers? Frozen in stasis or just embryos on ice?

And now you've caught sight of something more. This world, this life, it's not enough for you. You've seen the Celestials who've been fighting their wars and diverging from any common humanity for thousands of years. Like gods to us. Like monsters, forces of nature. You've seen the ancient Remnant engines wake, and how badly that can go. You've run with the Awakened. You've heard the technological voices in your head, the choir of the living and the dead that shaped the Centauri Cluster. That gives the Celestials their power. That can give you power, too.

Let me tell you about the Travelers. You think you've gone on a journey? When I was last on your world, your parents were kids, and it only feels like last year to me. When I was here before that, your grandparents hadn't even been born. That's the price you pay for a life near lightspeed, but it's the treasure of it, too. I have watched humanity establish itself on world after world, grow, fight, change, triumph. I have helped that happen. You can, too. Because you hear the voices, just as I do.

You need to learn about what's out there. You're a part of it now. Whether you take it and use it to boost your people's armor and weapons; whether you pair your humanity with the animal minds we uplifted and

brought out here; whether you make yourself a part of the ancient relics of another age. Command them, let them into your body. Choose your path to greatness. The powers that rule these stars have already started to notice you.

In these files you'll find the information that will keep you alive as you walk into the future. Vital secrets that can help you survive hostile worlds. Speculation and lore about the ancient civilizations that have left their ruins strewn across the Cluster, filled with threats and priceless artifacts in equal measure. The traditions and cultures of the most widespread of the Celestial Dominions. Which can be negotiated with, which must be fled or fought. You'll learn of the Changeling species the Celestials have created as their servants, and the Awakened that humanity engineered from the animal life of old Earth, and who live alongside us and share our struggle. You'll hold in your hands what little we know about the artifacts and technological marvels waiting out there amongst the myriad stars of the Cluster.

And, by the end, the most important thing you'll know is how much there is left to discover. You will walk on worlds we don't have names for. You will uncover the bones of civilizations no human ever knew. You will come face to face with truths wondrous and terrible that will shape the future of humanity. Forces beyond the imagination even of the Celestials themselves. And, when you do, you might find yourself in a position to tip the balance, shape the future, ensure the survival of yourself, your comrades, your species.

I give you this knowledge, because there is no other gift in the arsenals of all the Travelers that can better prepare you for what waits for you out there.

TIM BARTON

PRELUDE

In the millennia after the Exodus from Earth, human colonists made their way to the Centauri Cluster. They lived and evolved there for thousands of years. And now, in the last few centuries additional human arkships have once again arrived in the systems of the Cluster—the ships' occupants excited and anxious to explore its wonders and secrets.

The Cluster boasts scores of worlds to venture onto, some long ago colonized and now home to the civilizations of humanity's descendants: powerful Celestial Dominions. Other worlds have seen these Celestial civilizations come and go—leaving behind fragments of their culture, now waiting for brave souls to go and find them. Some are populated with engineered species of Changelings that thrive and multiply even after their Celestial creators abandon them. And of course, there are worlds that have not been cultivated and are still very wild; the fauna on these planets unlike anything ever seen on Earth.

This is a whole new playground for humanity to discover, but they must share it with the many other species that make the Cluster their home.

CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK

This *Exodus Encyclopedia* serves as a summary of the exotic universe awaiting intrepid Travelers. In these pages, the Game Master will find all the strange, remarkable, and horrifying creatures they need to populate abandoned starships, Celestial ruins, and uncharted planets. This book also contains information about the rare and elusive Remnants all Travelers seek.

For additional information on the setting, including detailed descriptions of the major planets, moons, and systems mentioned here, refer to *Chronicles of Melayu*. For the core rules and player character options, refer to the *Traveler's Handbook*.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Each chapter of this encyclopedia focuses on a different type of creature, Celestial item, or technology.

Chapter 1: Celestials

Celestials are the genetic descendants of humans. Over thousands of years, their biology has been dramatically altered by a combination of guided evolution, genetic engineering, and integrated biotech. This chapter presents some of the powerful and mysterious Celestial species that can be encountered.

Chapter 2: Changelings

Over thousands of years, genetic engineering has resulted in a wide variety of intelligent species that appear bizarre and alien to humans. These so-called "Changelings" were often crafted by Celestial civilizations from Awakened or human stock to perform specialized tasks. Travelers are likely to encounter many of these creatures when they venture out to explore new worlds.

Chapter 3: Awakened

In the 22nd century, humans on Earth used rudimentary genetic engineering to enhance the intelligence of many of the planet's native fauna, creating what are now known as "Awakened" animal species. These creatures are comparable to humans in intelligence. Most of the Awakened represented in this chapter arrived with humans on the arkships and remain fixtures of human society.

Chapter 4: Constructs

Both ancient and current Celestial Dominions have created powerful, semi-autonomous constructs, for warfare and security. Many that Travelers encounter are foes, but a lucky few humans have salvaged these machines and repurposed them to help humankind.

Chapter 5: Fauna

While all life in the Cluster is terrestrial in origin, some have evolved into strange and wonderful creatures. This chapter presents some of the animals that might be encountered by Travelers exploring the Cluster.

Chapter 6: Remnants

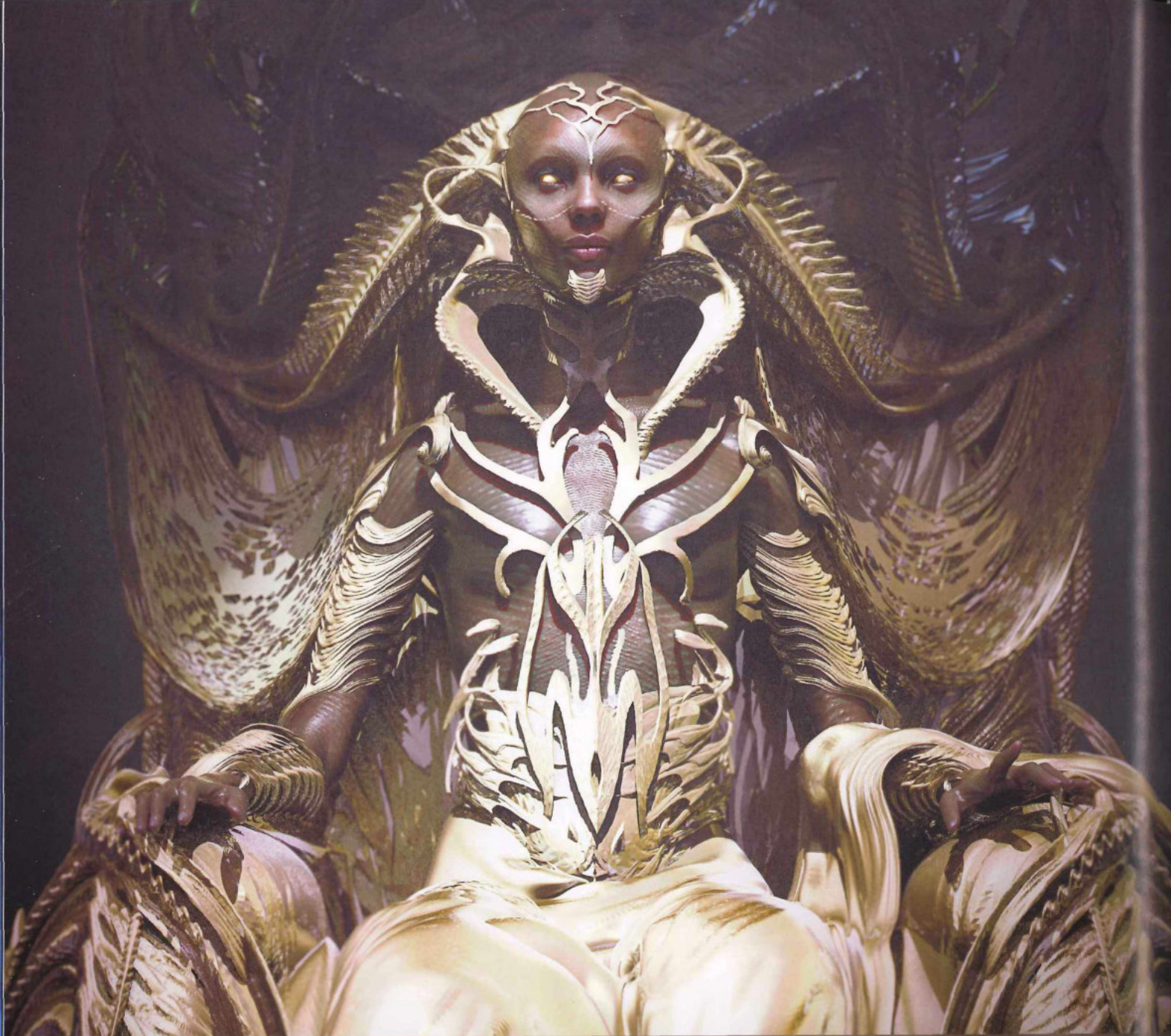
Celestial technological capability has long surpassed humankind's. Competing with these incredibly advanced creatures is near impossible. However, enterprising humans can scavenge for the Remnants of fallen Celestial Dominions. These artifacts are treasure troves of highly advanced tech and can be found on worlds where Celestial Dominions have come and gone.

Chapter 7: Technology

Once in possession of a Remnant, humanity has the opportunity to make a great technological discovery. Whether they got their hands on the Remnant by scouring a Remnant world or simply found a Celestial or Changeling willing to trade, the advancements represented in this chapter are a boon for human society.



CELESTIALS



THE SIX SYSTEMS

CROWN CELESTIALS

Queens of the Six Systems

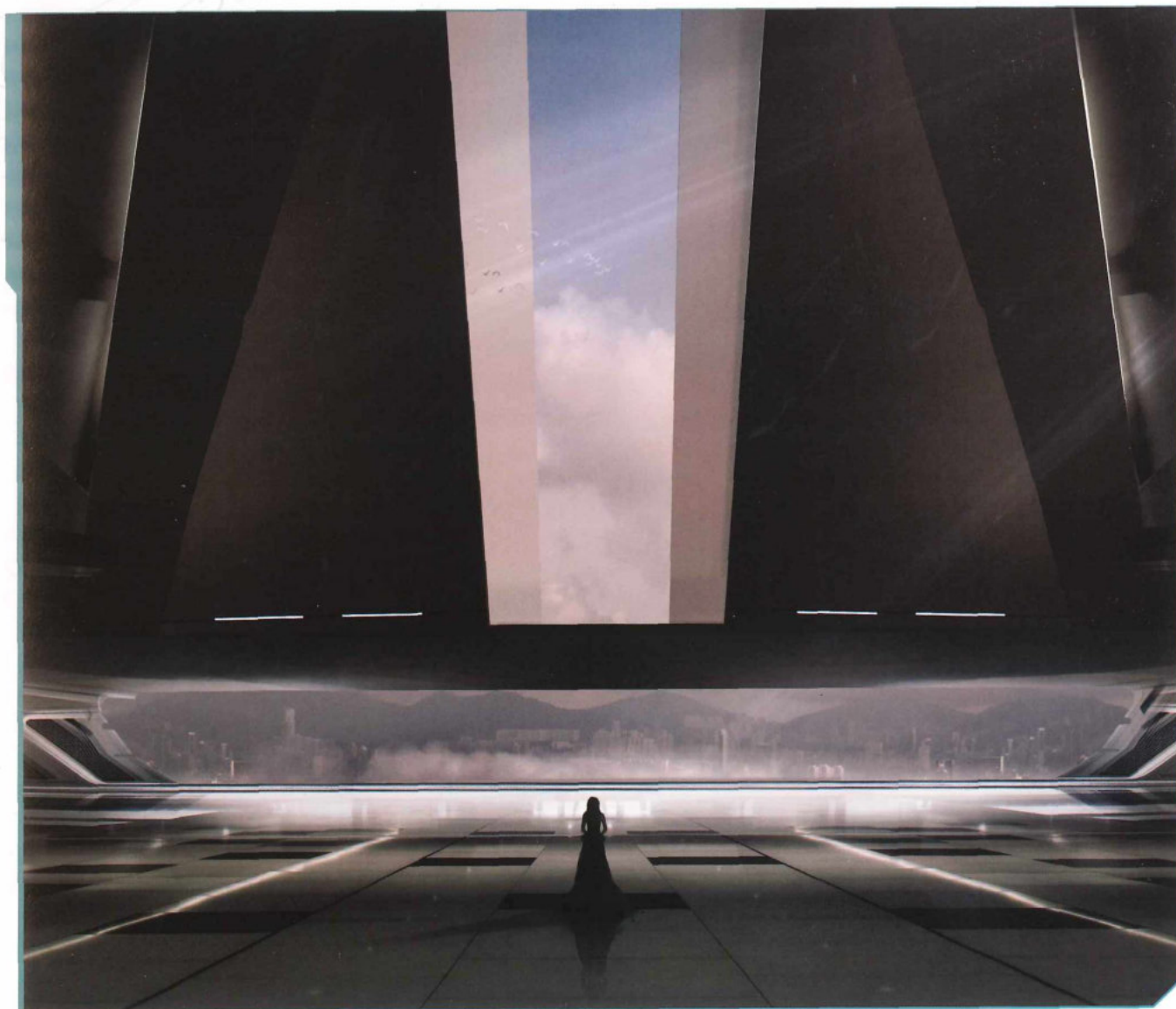
AARON SIMS CREATIVE

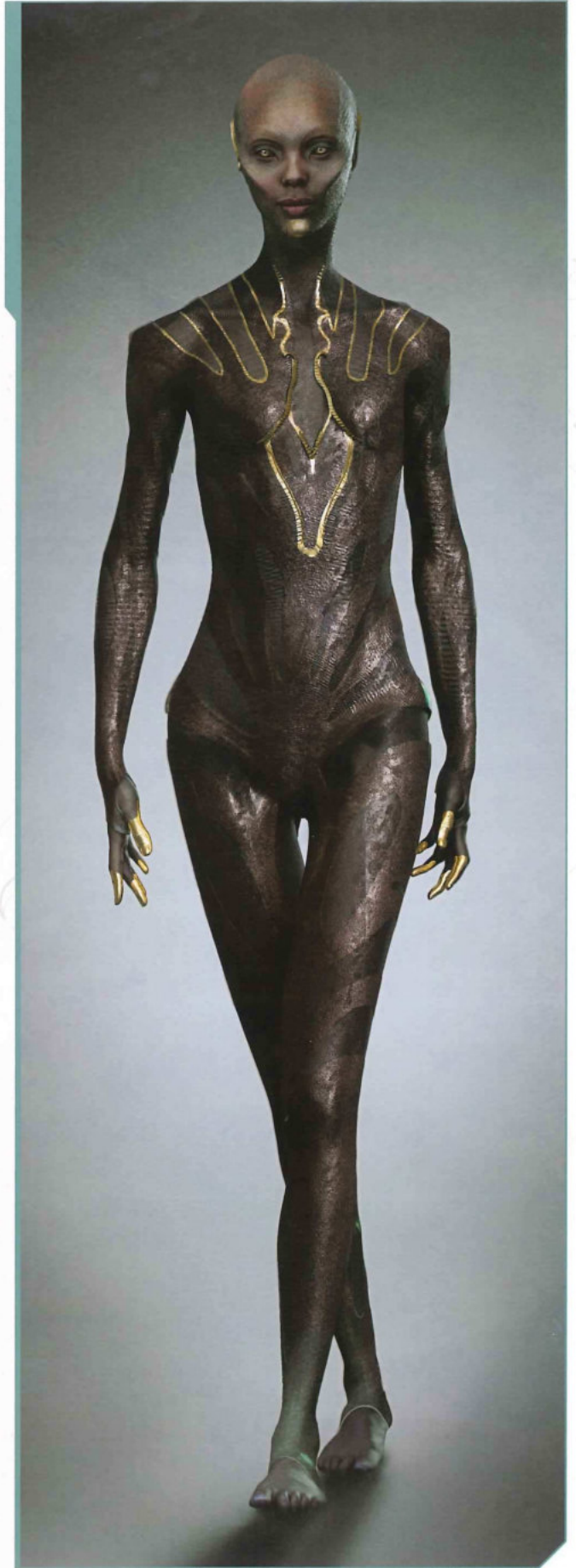
>>>> **VERAK, WYNID, BASSA, NIZINSK, CHELULI,** and Kelowan. These six brilliant stars and their systems make up the realm of space known as the Crown Dominion, a region roughly 15 light-years across.

The five regional systems are connected via Gates of Heaven, forming a circular link. Each is also linked directly to Kelowan, the capital system. There are few places in the galaxy where technology, science, and culture have reached the heights achieved in the Crown Dominion. There are marvels here beyond imagination. Robotics that merge science and high art. Mindline preservation techniques that toe the line of true immortality. And vicious bouts of political intrigue and economic maneuvering that would put the most conniving of human corporations to shame.

The six systems of the Crown Dominion were settled during the Crucible Era by Crown Celestials (known

as Imperial Celestials in most regions of the Cluster). This Celestial species is humanoid in appearance, normally between six and eight feet in height, and is found throughout the Centauri Cluster, though their population is concentrated in the Crown Dominion. The most unique feature of the Imperial Celestial species is the cybergenic link centered in the palm of their hands, giving them an ability known as "neural induction". Neural induction allows the user to mentally interface with certain technology, as well as with other Celestials, Changelings, Awakened, or humans that have been equipped with induction capacity. The captains of all Imperial spacecraft control their ships using neural induction. Livestone, the rock-like material that makes up most Crown Dominion architecture, can also be shaped using the ability. An Imperial Celestial simply lays hands on the material and wills it into the form they desire, creating complex structures that would be impossible to replicate using traditional means of construction.







UNUSUAL REPRODUCTION

Imperial Celestials have two sexes, male and female, and a reproduction method that many humans find fascinating. Imperial Celestial males are marsupials, while Imperial females have spawn uterus. A month after conception, the female deposits clutches of fertilized eggs into her male partner's pouch. Children remain within the pouch for about six months, absorbing blood and nutrients through an umbilicus nodule, before emerging.

Imperial children age much more rapidly than human children. They rely on their male parent for nutrient-rich milk for an average of three months before switching to solid food. By age five they reach their full adult height and have an intellect comparable to a fifteen-year-old human adolescent. Imperial clutches typically consist of 4 to 7 eggs. Although large clutches are physically draining on the male, a high number of offspring is essential to ensure enough ideal mindline candidates for the parents.

MINDLINE LINEAGE

More so than the eggs or male marsupial pouch, it is the mindline lineage that truly makes Imperial reproduction bizarre. Mindline transfer is, in effect, a kind of consciousness immortality. The first step occurs when fertilized eggs are placed into the brood pouch. Each parent then uses their neural induction to transfer a copy of their base personality onto the embryos that share their respective sexes. The children thus have the same thought process and behavior patterns as one of their parents. So, while human parents might harbor a guilty suspicion that some of their child's flaws are the gift of inheritance, Imperial parents truly have only themselves to blame for any personality traits they find aggravating in their offspring.

The second step in a mindline transfer occurs once Imperial children have reached adolescence. The adult parents each select one candidate to inherit their memories, again using neural induction for the transfer. Once the memory imprint is complete, the adult dies, allowing for uninterrupted personality continuation. While this process might seem ethically dubious to humans, raising concerns about the adolescent mind being overwritten by the more powerful adult consciousness, Imperial Celestials don't view it that way at all. In fact, Imperial children compete rigorously with each other for the honor of carrying on the mindline lineage. Thanks to mindline transfer, the head of an Imperial household is effectively the same person who founded it.

GREAT HOUSES

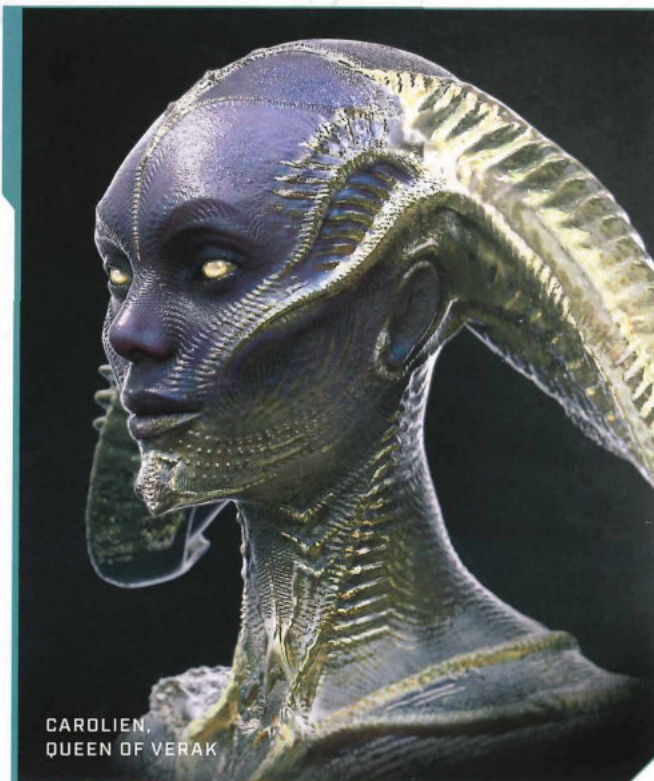
Imperial Celestials have a matriarchal society, with all noble families, arranged into Great Houses, always led by a female and the Verak, Wynid, Bassa, Nizinsk, and Cheluli systems each ruled by a royal queen. For the Royal Houses, preserving the queen's mindline is the household's most sacred duty and the selection process for a mindline successor is meticulous, as the queen seeks perfection each time. As a result of this careful preservation, the Imperial Queens trace their mindline lineage back thousands of years to when the Crown Dominion was first settled.

The Kelowan system also once had a Royal House. But it was wiped out during the tumultuous early days of the Dominion, when the Royal Houses would war endlessly with each other for control. After the fall of House Kelowan, the Imperial Accord of the Crown Stars was agreed upon by the surviving Royal Houses. Now, the five queens take the role of supreme Empress of the Crown Dominion in turns. This period on the Imperial Throne of Kelowan lasts for 60 years and must be spent in one body. If illness or injury forces an Empress to complete a mindline transfer, her reign is cut short.

In the thousands of years since the Imperial Accord, there have been no active wars between the Royal Houses. However, small skirmishes between proxy powers are common and the Houses constantly seek to expand their influence through economic and political maneuvering.

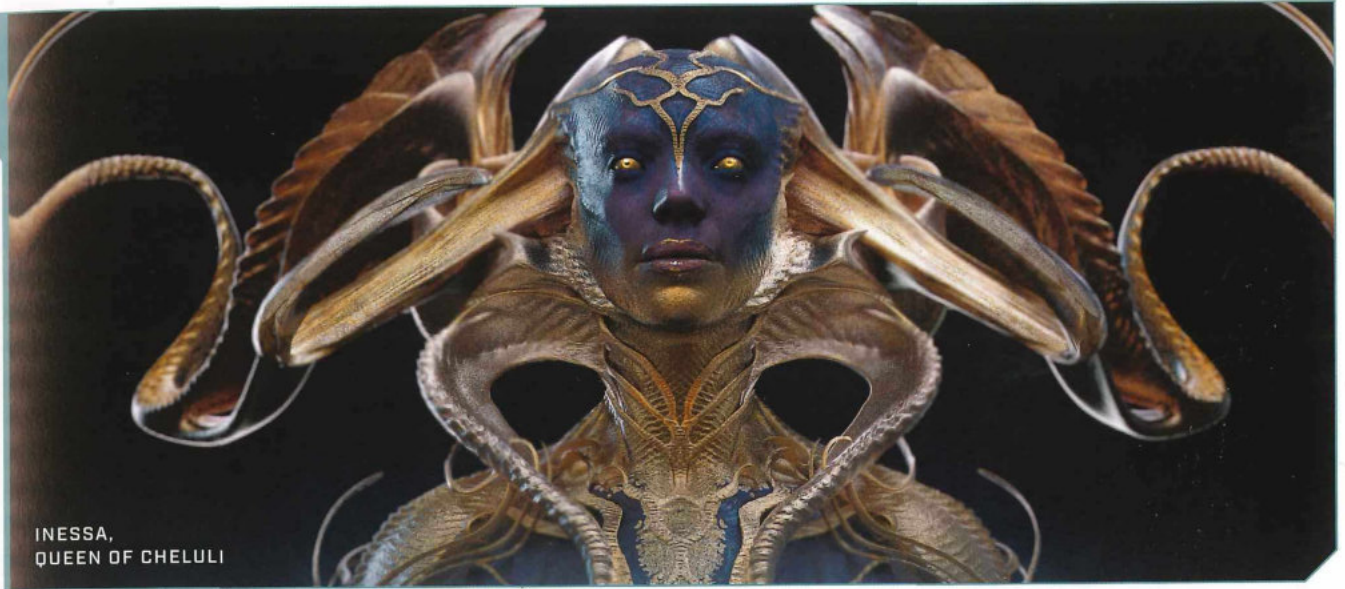


HELENA,
QUEEN OF WYNID

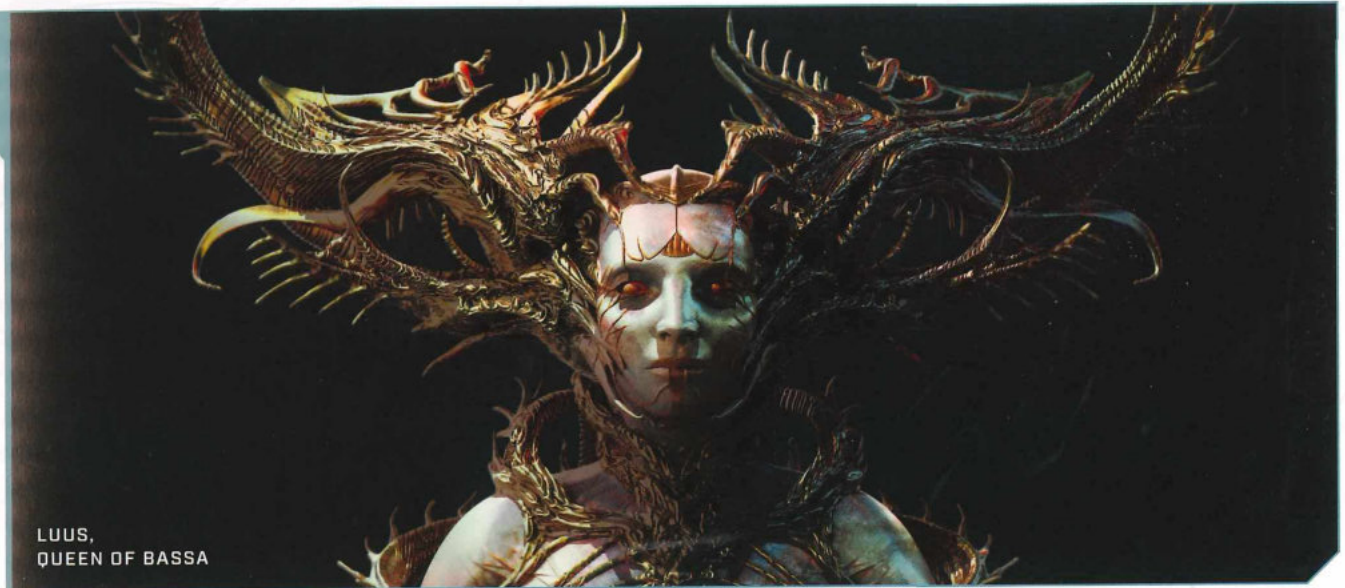


CAROLIEN,
QUEEN OF VERAK

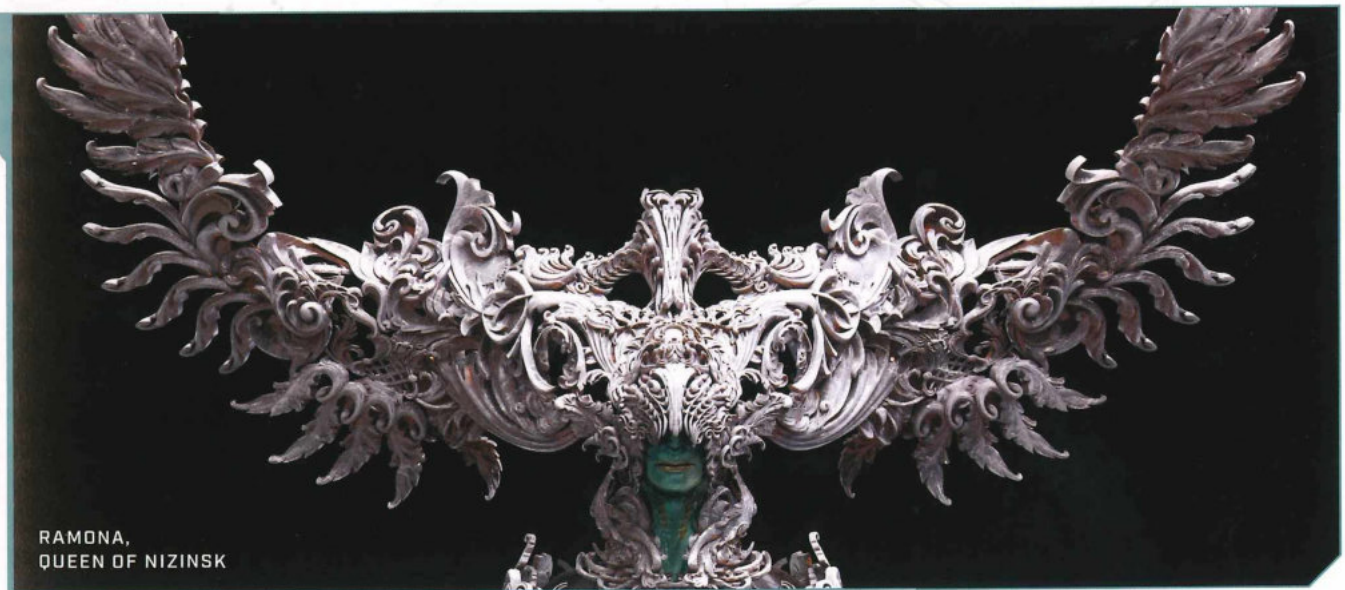
AARON SIMS CREATIVE



INESSA,
QUEEN OF CHELULI



LUUS,
QUEEN OF BASSA



RAMONA,
QUEEN OF NIZINSK

URANIC HUMANS

Humans who have been allowed to settle in the Crown systems often find themselves trapped at the bottom of a strict social hierarchy, with few rights and no means of moving up the ladder. Yet, humans are also the economic backbone for many lower Houses. You won't ever catch an Imperial Celestial setting foot on a mining planet, or, stars-forbid, a farm, much less deigning to do anything as undignified as menial labor. But they are more than happy to benefit from human toil, when doing so is cheaper than building machines, all while denying their labor force the right to own the very land they farm and live on.

The Imperial superiority complex is so great that they have even engineered a special class of humans to manage their workforce for them. These "uranic humans" are human-Imperial hybrids that sit just slightly above the rest of humanity on the Crown Dominion social ladder. Uranic humans have the Imperial neural induction ability and often make calculated reproduction choices amongst themselves to reinforce this trait. Occasionally, there are even male marsupials and females with spawn uteruses among the uranic humans, but these individuals are always sterile. Like their Celestial forebearers, uranic humans have adopted an aristocratic social hierarchy, and they rule the human governments in Crown space with all the pompousness that one might expect. And of course, everyone knows that these governments are mere lobby groups to the true Celestial overlords.

CROWN COMPANIES

Each Royal House has its own military, intelligence service, and company of loyal knights. To become Imperial Knights, Imperial Celestials must demonstrate exceptional physical ability, intelligence, and ferocity in combat. They must also be utterly loyal to their Houses. Knights are terrifying and uncompromising in battle. They wear armored suits that can withstand hard vacuum, and they utilize companies of genetically enhanced Awakened and highly advanced military constructs to further bolster their power. The only advantage a human has over a knight is to fight dirty.

Despite the constant subterfuge and cold war tactics that their Houses are engaged in with each other, knights adhere to a strict code of honor and clear rules of engagement. Attempting to follow these rules while going toe-to-toe with an Imperial Knight is a virtual death sentence for a human. Fortunately, the only true tenet of the Traveler code is survival. Playing fair won't get you far in a universe where the odds are stacked against you.





DANIEL HAHN



JULIAN CALLE



IMPERIAL KNIGHT

HUGE CELESTIAL

AC 21 (Imperial Mech)

Initiative +8 (18)

HP 241 (23d12 + 92)

Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	19	+4	+4	DEX	19	+4	+8	CON	10	+4	+4
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	16	+3	+7	CHA	15	+2	+2

Skills Insight +7, Perception +7, Piloting +8

Resistances Cold, Electrical, Heat, Radiation

Senses Passive Perception 17

Languages Imperial, Standard

CR 12 (XP 8,400; PB +4)

TRAITS

Mechanized Armor. The knight wears a fully sealed environmental suit and can survive in almost any environment. The knight doesn't need to breathe while wearing the suit and it provides protection against a vacuum for up to 4 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes three attacks, using Tendril, Arc Cannon, or Railgun in any combination.

Tendril. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) Electrical damage.

Arc Cannon. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature within 30 feet the knight can see. *Failure:* 13 (3d8) Electrical damage. The discharge then jumps to another creature within 30 feet of the first target and that creature takes 9 (2d8) Electrical damage.

Railgun. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +8, range 200/400 ft. *Hit:* 20 (3d10 + 4) Piercing damage.

Shockwave (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature in a 30-foot-radius Sphere centered on the knight. *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Electrical damage and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.

REACTIONS

Deflector Field. *Trigger:* A creature targets the knight with a ranged attack. *Response:* The knight deploys a deflective field and adds 2 to its AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss. If the attack misses, it is deflected back to its source, dealing damage as normal to the shooter.

Electrocharged. *Trigger:* The knight takes Electrical damage. *Response:* The next creature the knight hits with a Tendril or Arc Cannon attack takes an additional 13 (2d12) Electrical damage.

IMPERIAL LION

HUGE BEAST (AWAKENED)

AC 15 (Imperial Mech)

Initiative +5 (15)

HP 262 (25d12 + 100)

Speed 50 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+9	DEX	12	+1	+1	CON	19	+4	+4
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	16	+3	+7	CHA	14	+2	+2

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +7

Resistances Cold, Electrical, Heat, Radiation

Senses Passive Perception 17

Languages Imperial, Standard

CR 11 (XP 7,200; PB +4)

TRAITS

Mechanized Armor. The lion wears a fully sealed environmental suit and can survive in almost any environment. The lion doesn't need to breathe while wearing the suit and it provides protection against a vacuum for up to 4 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lion makes two Smash attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spike Launch.

Smash. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) Bludgeoning damage.

Spike Launch. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 50/100 ft., three targets. *Hit:* 7 (1d12 + 1) Piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Pounce (Recharge 5–6). *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 24 (3d12 + 5) Bludgeoning damage and the target has the Prone condition.

REACTIONS

Sturdy. *Trigger:* The lion takes damage totaling to less than 10. *Response:* The lion takes no damage.







DEVA CELESTIALS

DEVA CELESTIALS

The Wandering Mystics

PABLO MUÑOZ

>>>> TO A MODERN HUMAN, THE CENTAURI

Cluster is dominated by vastly powerful Celestial Dominions that control trade, technology, and travel, and have advanced so far that they can no longer be considered anything like humans. Invulnerable, immortal polities that will surely last forever.

To a human scholar, the Cluster is a graveyard of dead Celestial civilizations, many of which were as advanced and powerful—or more so—than anything we've met today. Some of which were so overwhelmingly sophisticated that the current great powers look like children playing in their dust. And yet these titans of past eras fell. Fell, and left only fragmentary records to show that they were ever there. Some imploded in brutal civil wars, as accelerating technology concentrated power into a handful of feuding individuals or small fiefdoms. Others met something they couldn't overcome—brutal interstellar conflicts between incompatible civilizations resulting in countless razed worlds and the extinction of all concerned. Nothing but bones and deactivated war toys left to show that such cultures ever existed.

A handful of these lost Celestial cultures are said to have achieved some transcendent state—uploaded minds, seclusion within some contra-physical realm, accelerated life at a constant near-light-speed burn. The only civilizations that truly last for millennia are those that find a stultifying stasis, a rigid social order that prevents any kind of change—which leaves them as ready prey for some brief-lived but bright-burning younger culture that consumes them before burning itself to cinders.

Sometimes these dead civilizations leave traces behind them. The Deva are one such.

EMRYS THE DEVA

Ageless, enigmatic, and claiming allegiance to the Elohim. A wanderer marked by countless regrets; he moves through the universe as a reclusive musician. Emrys takes on the role of a patient mentor, guiding his select companions with a rare, attentive fondness.

01 01

LONE CELESTIALS

Deva Celestials are rare, and yet are encountered throughout the Cluster. Often lone individuals are found living among other beings—Changelings, other Celestials, even humans now we've begun to spread our own colonies across the Cluster's habitable worlds. They stay for a while—given their long lives this can be several generations for their hosts—and move on, having learned all they wish to know. They carry a stock of piecemeal knowledge that they dispense sparingly, often only to those they deem worthy of it, or who have earned it in some inscrutable way. They are wise in the ways of other Celestial cultures and can be invaluable guides and advisors for those who must brave the customs and hazards of such diplomacy.

Deva are tall, horned, and asexual—humans conjecture they reproduce entirely by artificial means. It is possible they practice some manner of generational upload from body to body. Their theoretical lifespan is unknown, but many individuals have verifiably been around for centuries, maybe even over a millennium. Humans have simply not been around long enough to find out where new Deva come from or what happens to them.

Every Deva has developed a physical appearance that is unique, whether it is skin color or the shape of their horns, or lack thereof. Whilst their bodies aren't overly physically powerful, their brain structure allows them to directly control every aspect of their physiology, permitting them to purge toxins, ignore pain, repair damage, and perform physical tasks with effortless mastery.

Deva devices tend to be small, creating wider effects by the manifestation of fields of force, and drawing upon unusual energy sources that don't require frequent charging or cumbersome batteries. Because of their peculiar mental architecture, they are often unable to explain how any piece of their technology works, or even to know if any given goal is possible, until they spontaneously accomplish it.

INCREDIBLE TEACHERS

Where an individual Deva does decide that other beings are of interest, their erratic tutelage can be invaluable to humans of all stripes. Perhaps they identify a mysterious artifact, provide access to a sealed bunker, or turn aside a vengeful Imperial Knight with the recital of some ancient rebuke. On the other hand, perhaps they won't. They are unreliable mentors, and hard to fathom.

Every Deva has its own foibles but, amongst those who deign to have anything to do with humanity, an invasive curiosity is common. They seldom dispense wisdom on tap, but frequently teach through asking questions, and listen more than they speak. Occasionally they decide to actively meddle in events, sometimes at a grand scale affecting whole worlds, alternatively giving the same level of concentration to minor matters of a few families or individuals. It is always impossible to know what they will find important. Indeed, they themselves hardly seem to

know, mostly because the mind of a Deva doesn't function as a unified whole, even as much as a human mind does.

Deva cognition is compartmentalized and lacks a single focus. Instead, they have multicameral brains, effectively linked but semi-independent centers of thought existing at a semiconscious level. The apparent "personality" of the Deva is the product of the competing demands of these separate loci—from three to as many as eight depending on the age and abilities of the Deva. What the individual "knows" at any given time varies wildly depending on which mental nodes are engaged with the active personality, but the general rule is that a Deva can never consciously explain why they do or say a thing. They are enigmatic even to themselves. To a human this seems like a wildly unsatisfactory state of affairs, tantamount to psychosis, but it is the natural state of the Deva—at least as they exist now—and they claim that this curious disassociation gives them a broader ability to engage with all the many snippets of knowledge that they encounter.

DEEP HISTORY

Far-ranging human scholars have uncovered some clues as to the deep history of the apparently benevolent Deva that suggests they were not always the wandering philosophers they now appear to be—and that perhaps they retain the potential to be something far more problematic in the future.

A variety of ancient ruins, and a handful of extant Celestial cultures, record a widespread civilization of the Remnant Wars whose members resemble the modern-day Deva. The nature of this culture is a long way from the modern breed: warlike and tyrannical, vastly invested in industrial technology, exterminators of other Celestials, despoilers of worlds. Legends and incomplete records suggest that the culture grew potent enough to challenge the Elohim for mastery of the Cluster, leading to one of the great showdowns of the Remnant Era. That culture, according to most sources, was obliterated, every trace of it removed. Except that the Deva are still with us, and by all accounts appear to be the leftovers of that ancient threat.

Scholars conjecture that, when finally brought to bay by the Elohim, some arrangement was reached that allowed a fraction of that ancient warrior culture to survive past their civilization's extinction. Or perhaps this was a punishment by the Elohim for their overweening hubris. For certainly the Deva of today seem to have neither connection to, nor memory of, this past incarnation of their species. When confronted with evidence, the facts simply slide off them. Some scholars see a deliberate evasion covering some sinister plot, but the majority believe that some implanted and hereditary mental block prevents them from ever recognizing or connecting with that past incarnation of their culture—perhaps incidentally blocking them from fully utilizing their remarkable brains.

UNKNOWN PURPOSE

A handful of researchers believe there is more to the Deva's murky past even than this. When Deva meet, they commune with one another—a lengthy and ritualistic greeting, often including various local customs and locations. They spend time together, peaceably enough, but seem to actively interact very little. And then one or other will go on their way. So far, so bafflingly mystical. Covert investigation of such meetings, however, shows curious electromagnetic traffic, and decontamination sensors detect an interchange of nanobot-sized particles between the Deva. The suggestion is that information is being exchanged in some highly efficient but subconscious manner. Is each Deva sharing with the other all that it has discovered? Does each go away with new information to add to some internal library that it can't consciously access? Some believe that the last act of the ancient Deva was to infect their entire species with an artificial virus that seeks out and stockpiles knowledge in some way that wouldn't trigger the wrath of the Elohim. Some means beyond the notice even of the Deva themselves.

The Deva now travel the Cluster, observing the affairs of other cultures, occasionally acting for reasons they can't themselves elucidate. Gathering knowledge which they silently impart to others of their kind. Everybody's kindly advisor, the harmless mystics. Unless, of course, they are unwittingly reconstructing a record of the monstrous civilization that once was theirs. Discovering it piece by piece through the works and delving of others, after the Elohim locked their past away from them and forbade them to ever go looking for it. One day, enough Deva might discover enough clues and then gather. If so, might that terrible elder culture be reborn in fire to challenge the Elohim once again?

NAMED DEVA

Among Travelers, certain Deva have gained renown. These Celestials are seen as either powerful, enigmatic allies, or as agents of chaos capable of leading entire human civilizations to ruin. What follows are just a few of the better known Deva that humankind has encountered.

YUNUS

Yunus is what's known as a Long-traveler—one of those rare beings who pilot their ships near lightspeed, looping through a circuit of worlds in relativistic months while centuries, even millennia, pass outside. No one knows her true age, though some speculate her origins lie in the Remnant era.

From world to world, she follows her route with singular purpose, consumed by the drive to master a skill—a pursuit that might last a century or be abandoned in an instant. Over her journeys, Yunus has been an artist, crafting works of astonishing beauty, a builder of miraculous technologies, and a warrior who lends her skill to wars she has no personal stake in.



01 03



MORASH

Morash has traveled much of the Cluster, eking out a long lifetime on a solitary quest for incomprehensible truths. Morash was traveling incognito long before we humans arrived. He moved amongst the Changelings and the lower castes of his Celestial siblings, keeping his head down as he went about his quests. The advent of humanity provided him with a new environment that he could adapt himself to hide in. Emulating a human shape and nature is child's play. However, living under human restrictions for any period of time can be powerfully frustrating to one who has known the godlike power of the Celestials.

Travelers have often speculated on what Morash truly seeks. Some say he is hunting a lost relic or an ancient world—the last, scattered traces of his people. Others whisper that he searches for the final heirs of his fallen Dominion, the remnants of a legacy that lingers, just barely, in the shadowed corners of the Cluster.

01 04



HOSENG

Then there is Hoseng and his elusive "Chaotects". To outsiders, his philosophy might seem aligned with Lilit's, but Hoseng's vision is far more radical, almost terrifying in its purity. Most Travelers regard him as an ancient entity of chaos. He claims membership in a secret society, one that draws in the most disaffected from other Celestial civilizations—but no human has ever knowingly encountered another Chaotect.

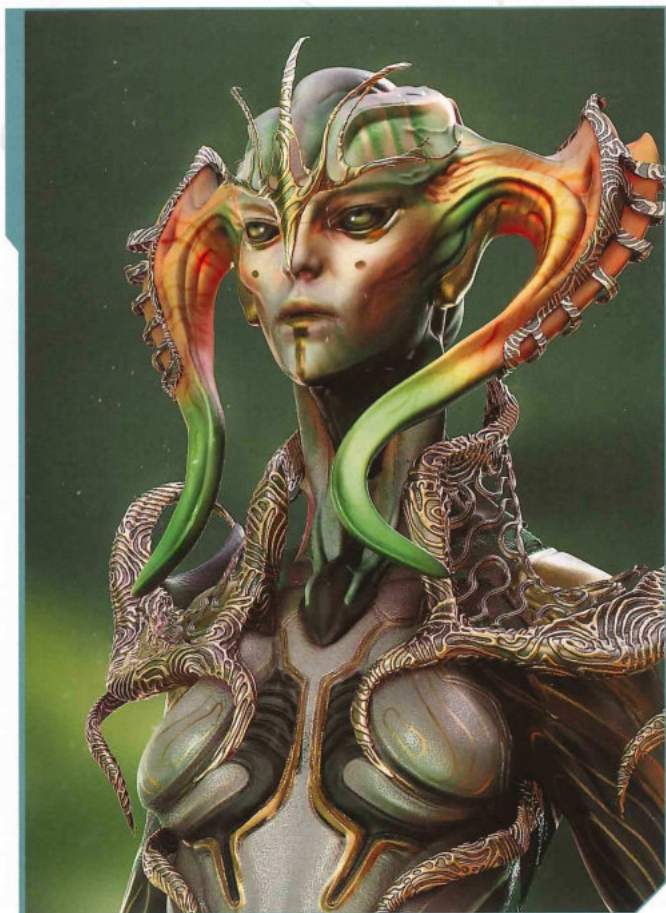
Many Celestial cultures appear to have suffered from his machinations. Imperial Celestials of the Crown Dominions have had their mindlines corrupted, individuals of countless generations twisted as they pass into new generations. Likewise, cells of funerary Monyet Changelings have been turned so that they rob the sacred tomb ships of the Keledai instead. Even the great experience archives of the Mara Yama have been infected and destroyed by such as Hoseng.

01 05

LILIT

Lilit lives by a single, uncompromising creed. If you meet her without masks, she'll be disarmingly open about her intentions and will even indulge in long, expansive explanations. Flux, evolution, strength through change. She loathes the idea of stagnation—a condition she sees wherever she looks, in the wider Cluster. The carefully manufactured immortality of many Celestials is anathema to her. She claims that any structure or system that exists solely to perpetuate itself is flawed and can only inevitably destroy itself. Which boils down to a preference to find the stress lines of such systems and accentuate those flaws to destroy the whole. That way, she can claim she is just accelerating natural processes, rather than engaging in malicious meddling. She loves to foul treaties between Dominions, spread misunderstandings, start wars, free Changelings, and release anything being kept safe and hidden—whether that's a secret or a technology or a virulent disease. The arrival of humans in the Cluster was a boon to Lilit. We were always going to be a disruptive factor, no matter our intentions. More than one human colony owes its early survival to Lilit leaning in to place a finger on the scales. Yet we are only pawns to her, not friends.

01 06



AARON SIMS CREATIVE



DEVA

MEDIUM CELESTIAL

AC 17 (Celestial armor)

Initiative +9 (19)

HP 195 (30d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+3	DEX	20	+5	+5	CON	15	+2	+2
INT	17	+3	+7	WIS	13	+1	+1	CHA	18	+4	+8

Skills Electronics +7, History +11, Insight +9, Mechanics +5, Medicine +9, Persuasion +12, Piloting +9.

Resistances Poison

Immunities Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages All

CR 10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

TRAITS

Technological Attunement. The Deva is capable of interfacing with all Celestial and human technology, without requiring any equipment and has Advantage on all Intelligence (Electronics) and Wisdom (Mechanics) checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Deva makes two attacks, using Force Blade or Nanobot Assault in any combination.

Force Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 24 (3d12 + 5) Energy damage.

Nanobot Assault. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +9, range 150 ft. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) Piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Nanobot Repair (Recharge 6). The Deva targets itself, or a creature it can see within 120 feet. The target heals 27 (6d8) Hit Points. If the target is a Construct, it heals an additional 18 (4d8) Hit Points.

REACTIONS

Defensive Field. *Trigger:* The Deva is hit by an attack roll. *Response:* The Deva unleashes a swarm of nanobots to create a forcefield. It adds 5 to its AC against attack rolls (including the triggering attack) until the start of its next turn, possibly causing the attacks to miss.

Defensive Shell. *Trigger:* The Deva is exposed to a vacuum or an airless environment of any kind. *Response:* The Deva covers itself in protective nanobots, providing air to breathe and Resistance to Cold, Heat, and Radiation damage for 1 hour.



KELEDAI CELESTIALS

KELEDAI CELESTIALS

The Hermits



>>>> KELEDAL ARE HUMANOID, THEIR SKIN wrinkled and their limbs thin with large joints. Their faces—those rare times when you get to see them—are blank and same-y, absolutely symmetrical. Which you don't realize is profoundly disquieting until you see it. There is very little variation between Keledai features and they seem to identify one another more through instinctive recognition of body language micro-patterns, something humans can't pick up easily, though a number of Changeling and Awakened species can (dogs, for example, and corvids). Keledai cover their faces most of the time—either with simple hoods or masks, often blankly mirrored.

The Keledai aren't what they were, for which we can all be properly grateful. Millennia ago, they had a bustling and populous civilization in the Hylase star system. This civilization eventually came to a cataclysmic end. Despite their best efforts, plenty of evidence remains of the vastly destructive war their various factions fought in the star system millennia ago. No longer the sole inhabitants of the Hylase system, the Keledai now share their system with the Combine and the Ascendancy (outcast Imperial Celestials from the Crown Dominion), and much more recently arrived humans.

CULTURAL EUTHANASIA

Keledai are biologically but not culturally long-lived. Which means that at a certain point in their lives (it varies but seems to be around the two-century mark), they are expected to offer themselves up for euthanasia and recovery by one of their servitor Changelings, the Monyet. The occasional solitary renegade you meet might well have reneged on this and is trying to evade a hunting party keen to remind them of their traditions. It's not known why they've come to espouse this cycle, but human scholars speculate that a drive for longevity and temporal power may have been what fractured the old Keledai society way back.

SPEAKER STONES

If you don't want to deal with one of the Keledai's Changeling go-betweens, it is possible to eventually get the Keledai's attention and get them talking, but most humans regret doing so. The Keledai don't speak, and perhaps have no audible voice at all anymore. It's believed that they communicate one to another via a projected virtual matrix that is rolled out wherever more than one Keledai can be found, operating on wavelengths, or using principles, not fully understood. For lesser beings they have the Speaker Stones. These black monolith-looking artifacts, located within their land-based communities or launched from their ships and orbitals, form an abrupt link with a non-Keledai amongst the visiting party, taking over their body and neural architecture

and transforming them into a mouthpiece for the duration. The process sometimes leaves the mouthpiece with permanent nerve damage and, on occasion, the Keledai have overlooked maintaining the body's autonomic systems entirely. There appears to be no way of guaranteeing which member of any delegation becomes the speaker.

UNCHALLENGED HERMITS

As this evidences, Keledai technology is extremely sophisticated, something overlooked by people who see them as reclusive mystics. Their numbers are tiny compared to humans and other Celestials, and they appear to have no standing army. Despite this, no other Celestial factions have shown any inclination to challenge them in their places, though, and if any human has tried it, nobody ever found the pieces.

THE ASYNJUR

The main exception to their peaceable acceptance of death is when a Keledai achieves some level of intellectual, spiritual, and physical achievement and is recognized as "asynjur", becoming simultaneously a cultural leader and a superhuman guru. Asynjur live for centuries, possibly forever. There are rumors that occasionally they fall from grace later, and there are a few Traveler tales of furious battles on far frozen wastelands where errant asynjur are brought to bay by their fellows. The Keledai are very keen on self-regulation. It's worth noting that individual Keledai don't seem to strive to become asynjur, but simply to improve themselves in various ways. Presumably, a strong desire for the station would preclude an individual from ever attaining it. The awarding of the title and status appears to be spontaneous—other Keledai abruptly "recognize" that the individual of note has become asynjur through some cue imperceptible to humans.

The idea that Keledai—especially the asynjur—are working towards some great cultural plan is persistent, if unevidenced. They have the most sophisticated technology in the system outside the Elohim Gates, and surely something is going on within their shrouded cities on Talaydin. This can just be human paranoia; perhaps they have genuinely forsaken all such ambitions, in the shadow of their own near self-extinction. However, Travelers keep spinning stories of what it is the Keledai want, from a sudden wildfire conquest of the Poseidon Nebula to a mass cultural migration to some hypothetical paradise when enough of them achieve asynjur-hood, to the development of Elohim-prohibited tech that would allow them to break all physical laws and travel back in time to prevent their own folly of ages past.

KELEDAI

MEDIUM CELESTIAL

AC 20 (Celestial armor) **Initiative** +2 (12)

HP 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	11	+0	+0	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	20	+7	+12	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	18	+4	+7

Skills History +8, Insight +8, Medicine +5

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Keledai; understands Imperial and Standard
CR 5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Keledai makes a Rebuff attack or two Mental Spike attacks.

Rebuff. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) Bludgeoning damage. The target has the Prone condition.

Mental Spike. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 200 ft. *Hit:* 18 (3d10 + 2) Sonic damage.

Form Speaker (Recharge 5–6). *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 16, one creature the Keledai can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Dominated condition for 24 hours, or until released by the Keledai. While Dominated, the target also has the Restrained condition. At any time, the Keledai can use the target to speak. The Keledai can have only one creature Dominated in this way at a time.

At the end of each of its turns, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success or the Keledai can end the effect by using a Bonus Action. Finally, the effect automatically ends if the Keledai becomes Incapacitated.

KELEDAL ASYNJUR

MEDIUM CELESTIAL

AC 22 (Celestial armor)

Initiative +14 (24)

HP 256 (27d8 + 135)

Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2	+7	DEX	18	++4	+4	CON	20	+5	+10
INT	24	+7	+12	WIS	18	+4	+4	CHA	22	+6	+11

Skills History +17, Insight +14, Medicine +14, Persuasion +16

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Keledai; understands Imperial and Standard
CR 13 (XP 10,000; PB +5)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The asynjur makes two attacks, using Rod or Mental Spike in any combination.

Rod. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (4d4 + 2) Bludgeoning damage. The target has the Prone condition.

Mental Spike. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +9, range 200 ft. *Hit:* 26 (4d10 + 4) Sonic damage.

Form Speaker. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 19, one creature the Keledai can see within 120 feet. *Failure:* The target has the Dominated condition for 24 hours. While Dominated, the target also has the Restrained condition. At any time, the asynjur can use the target to speak. The asynjur can have only one target Dominated in this way at a time.

At the end of each of its turns, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success or the asynjur can end the effect by using a Bonus Action. Finally, the effect automatically ends if the asynjur becomes Incapacitated.

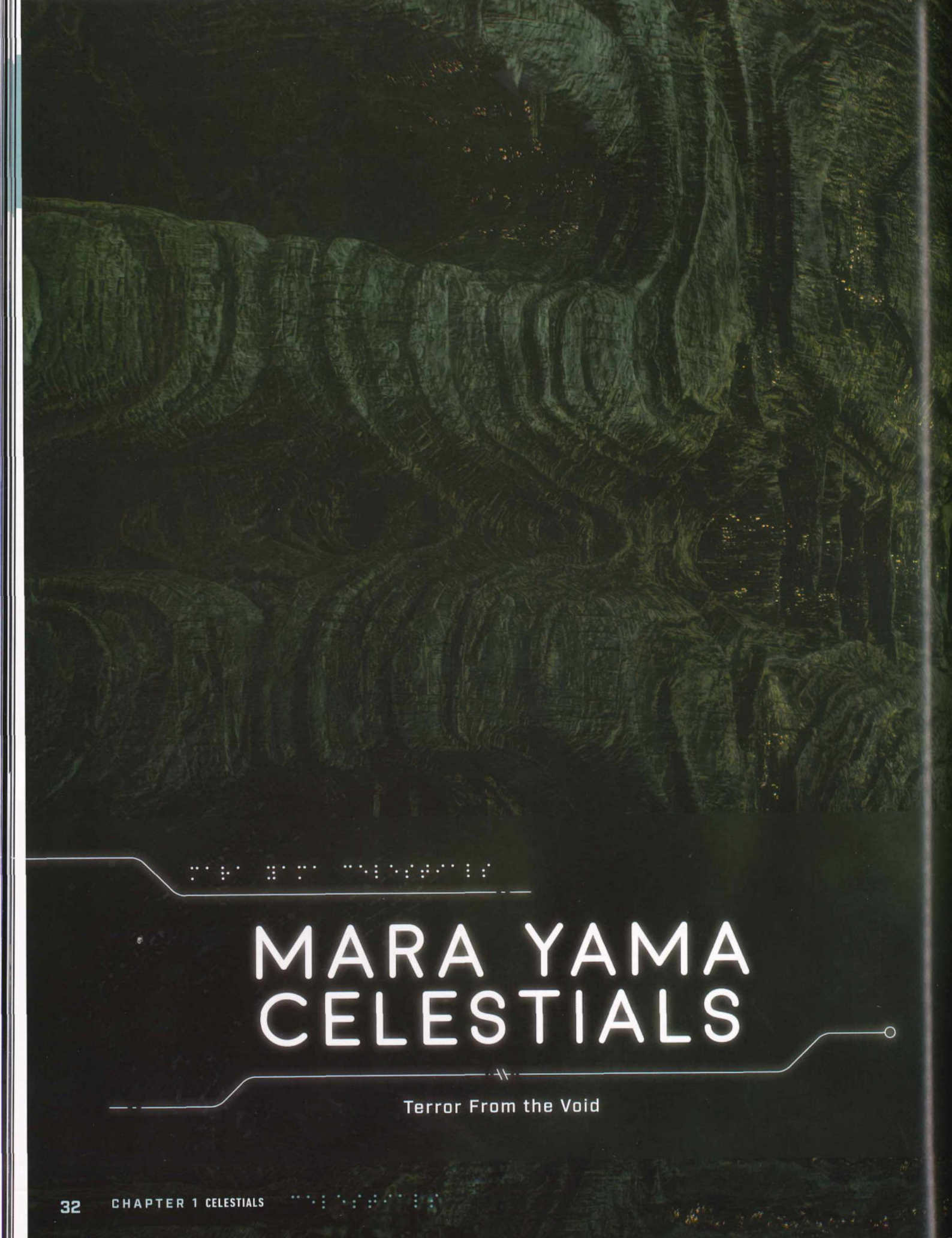
BONUS ACTIONS

Mental Overload. A creature Dominated by the asynjur takes 19 (3d12) Heat damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect. *Trigger:* The asynjur is hit by an attack roll. *Response:* The asynjur adds 4 to its AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.





MA YAMA CELESTIALS

MARA YAMA CELESTIALS

Terror From the Void



>>>> SPEAK TO ANY SEASONED

Traveler or experienced cargo pilot and you are likely to hear at least one high-stakes tale of terror involving the Mara Yama. Though very little is known about their origins, it is rumored that they were once humanoid Celestials from somewhere near the Poseidon Nebula.

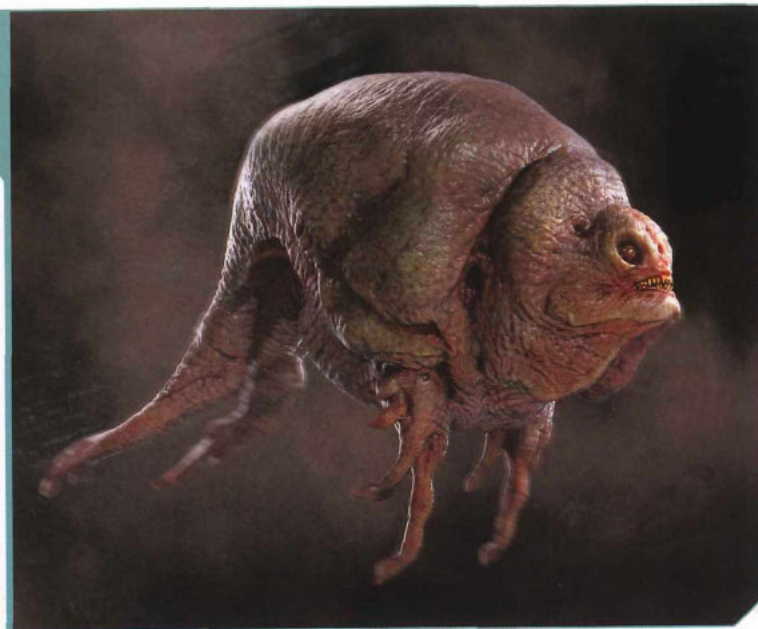
There is nothing to confirm or discredit this, but it has been a very long time since the Mara Yama were anything approaching human. Intense genetic manipulation, cosmic radiation, and thousands of years spent in a micro-gravity environment have given the Mara Yama a variety of shockingly diverse and morbid forms.

AARON SIMS CREATIVE

WEIGHTLESS BASE FORM

While traveling in their massive ships and citadels—which Mara Yama spend most of their time doing—their bones and limbs degenerate. They become pudgy torsos with squat, sunken heads, long hands attached to short, flexible wrists, and fins instead of feet. Their bones and hearts become so weak under micro-gravity conditions that they must rely on flight boards to travel even small distances within their ships. Despite the objective horridness of their most typical form, Mara Yama live incredibly long lives thanks to their advanced biogenetic techniques and disregard for scientific ethics.

01 07



WARRIOR FORM

Should a Mara Yama feel the need to slake their blood-lust firsthand, they trigger a regeneration process which allows them to regrow their limbs and enlarge their hearts to be able to handle standard gravity. This process can take several months, and the Mara Yama meticulously plan ground raids decades in advance to accommodate it.

A Mara Yama's warrior form might include enhanced muscle structure, nerve-reflexes, and purely cosmetic alterations such as horns and even hooves. The most advanced among them can also control their adrenal glands and pheromonic production, creating adrenaline surges that heighten their reflexes, or release targeted pheromones that inspire gut-wrenching terror in their victims. But the Mara Yama's predilection for bizarre body-modification doesn't stop there.

01 08



MERGING GIANTS

These Celestials have come up with a cure for the cancers and mutations caused by prolonged exposure to cosmic radiation that is more horrific than the disease. While some Mara Yama bodies can adapt, even making features of their abnormal growths, others must seek salvation through mergers. Precisely what they sound like, mergers allow two Mara Yama to meld together their bodies and minds while rejecting cancerous organs, literally ejecting entire livers and corrupted lungs during the slow, messy process. Mara Yama can merge endlessly, becoming larger and more alien with each meld. Eventually, these misshapen giants are forced to the outside of their citadels where they become one with the livestone hulls. Should you ever have the misfortune to encounter a citadel in the flesh, you might mistake the massive gaping maws and huge twisted faces for intricate gargoyles. Look closer. Or better yet, flee. Though if you are near enough to see the hulls, it is already far, far too late for you.

PREDATORY FLEETS

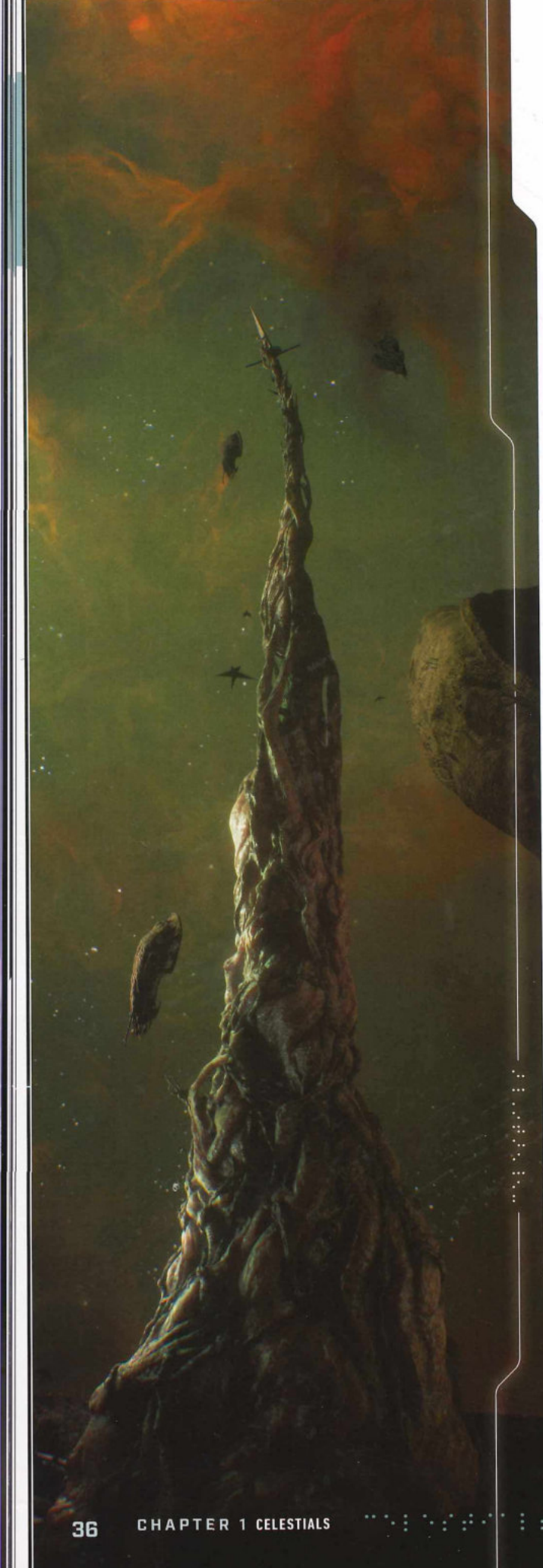
The Mara Yama are nomadic, and their fleets move through the darkest depths of space like shoals of predatory fish, searching for soft, unsuspecting targets. Their collectives are found in desolate regions of space, in areas where quintessence lines and the Gates of Heaven can't reach, thanks

to the Mara Yama's clever use of entropy drives to arrive there in the ancient past. A massive spectacle, a collective is formed out of multiple citadels and hundreds of smaller ships. But it is also a fairly rare phenomenon, as the Mara Yama spend much of the time broken up into smaller fleets, traveling near the Pathways in search of prey, and occasionally stopping above gas giants to replenish their fuel—the only time they are relatively vulnerable and the time when they are most territorial. Neither ships nor stations nor even planet-bound colonies are safe from the Mara Yama. Preferring to capture rather than destroy, a Mara Yama fleet will slowly wear down the defenses and propulsion drive of a ship until the vessel can't fight back. They then draw in their prey. If a merged Mara Yama is attached to the outside of the citadel hull, they might reach out with their giant claws and grab the unfortunate ship, creating a living bridge for a boarding party to cross over. These boarding parties often consist of hordes of hideous Changeling soldiers known as Koven.

EXPERIENCE HUNTERS

While the Mara Yama seek out resources and new technologies like any other pirate or salvager, what sets them apart is their apparent deep-seated desire to collect a stranger type of treasure. Experiences, novel memories, and unique emotions—they harvest these things from the brains of their victims in excessively cruel processes, rending apart minds with the same ease that they tear flesh. Usually, their victims die during this neural drain or are killed afterward. Occasionally, however, it seems to amuse the Mara Yama to allow their prey to escape after they've had their fill of toying with it. These rare survivors are haunted forevermore by the shadows of their tormentors. They are often left with terrible mutilations, holes in their memories, and a vague sense that they used to feel things more deeply. That joy was once more vibrant, sorrow a little more bittersweet. But the fear never leaves. It comes in the night with the sound of the ship





exhaust like the breathing of one of those loathsome monsters. A slow breathing between smiling teeth before the terror rises and the sweat drips down your face and you find yourself huddled beneath your bunk, hands clenched round your head as you try to remember, try to remember, try to remember.

UGLY EXTERIORS

Another fascinating aspect of the Mara Yama is the unique juxtaposition of their exterior and interior ship architecture. From a distance, these ships typically have a cylindrical shape, broken up occasionally by towers and other protrusions. On closer inspection, it becomes evident that their citadels are massive vessels made of livestone that has been modified for vacuum so that it grows constantly, perpetually increasing in size to accommodate growing Mara Yama numbers and their terrifying collections of genetic creations. Their great size makes propulsion an onerous task. Even equipped with powerful fusion drives, they rarely accelerate beyond point-one gees unless in pursuit of prey. As a result, interstellar flights take decades, even centuries.

BEAUTIFUL INTERIORS

The interior of a Mara Yama citadel is a haphazard maze of ununiform corridors, chambers, and open spaces, arranged with seemingly no rhyme nor reason. They are also unexpectedly beautiful.

The Mara Yama feed the livestone of their ships on captured asteroids, allowing them to constantly shed and regrow the outermost layer of the hulls, which can die to particle abrasion or combat with other vessels. The asteroids also provide the livestone with the necessary nutrients for internal plant growth and the Mara Yama have transformed the interiors of their citadels into botanical paradises unlike anything else in the universe. The walls are woven together with living tree trunks, curling vines, and grain stalks. Garlands of greenery, sweet-smelling flowers, and rich fruits hang from the ceiling and green grass grows freely from the soft livestone floors. Flocks of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators provide a constant hum of busy wings as they bumble about the blossoming flowers, oblivious to the strange and cruel Celestials that dwell amongst them.

SURVIVE FOR ETERNITY

Why the Mara Yama have dedicated themselves to violent delights no one can say for certain. They are so alien in language and mindset; it may be that they see little wrong with ripping apart sapient minds, destroying innocent colonies, or performing terrible genetic experiments. What we do know, however, from the few survivors that have communicated with these hostile entities, is that the Mara Yama believe that the ultimate purpose of life is to survive until the end of the universe and time itself. Everything they do may simply be grim entertainment as they while away the minutes of eternity.



MARA YAMA WARRIOR

MEDIUM CELESTIAL

AC 16

Initiative +3 (13)

HP 119 (14d8 + 56)

Speed 30 ft.

		MOD		SAVE			MOD		SAVE			MOD		SAVE
STR	17	+3		+3	DEX	16	+3		+3	CON	18	+4		+7
INT	18	+4		+8	WIS	14	+2		+2	CHA	9	-1		-1

Resistances Acid, Cold, Heat, Radiation

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Mara Yama

CR 7 (XP 2,900; PB +3)

TRAITS

Environment Suit. The warrior wears a fully sealed environmental suit and can survive in almost any environment. The warrior doesn't need to breathe while wearing the suit and it provides protection against a vacuum for up to 12 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The warrior makes three attacks, using Gore or Rifle in any combination.

Gore. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) Piercing damage. If the warrior reduces a creature to 0 Hit Points with this attack, the warrior can take a Bonus Action to move up to half its Speed and make another Gore attack.

Rifle. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 19 (3d10 + 3) Piercing damage.

Suppression (2/Day). *Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 19 (3d10 + 3) Piercing damage and the target has the Suppressed condition.

REACTIONS

Terrify. *Trigger:* The warrior damages another creature. *Response:* The warrior bares its fangs, howls, or otherwise intimidates the creature it just damaged, subjecting the creature to the following effect. *Wisdom Saving Throw:* DC 15, the damaged creature. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition for 1 minute. *Success:* The target is immune to the warrior's Terrify for 24 hours.



MARA YAMA ASSASSIN

MEDIUM CELESTIAL

AC 20

Initiative +9 (19)

HP 195 (30d8 + 60)

Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	11	+0	+0	DEX	20	+5	+9	CON	15	+2	+2
INT	18	+4	+8	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	9	-1	-1

Skills Acrobatics +9, Stealth +9

Vulnerabilities Sonic

Resistances Acid, Cold, Heat, Radiation

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Mara Yama

CR 12 (XP 8,400; PB +4)

TRAITS

Environment Suit. The assassin wears a fully sealed environmental suit and can survive in almost any environment. The assassin doesn't need to breathe while wearing the suit and it provides protection against a vacuum for up to 12 hours.

Regeneration. The assassin regains 10 Hit Points at the start of its turn. If the assassin takes Sonic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the assassin's next turn. The assassin dies only if it starts its turn with 0 Hit Points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The assassin makes three Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +9, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) Slashing damage. If the assassin has Advantage on the attack roll, the target takes an extra 21 (6d6) Slashing damage.

Eye Beam (1/Day). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 16, each creature in a 100-foot long, 10-foot-wide Line. *Failure:* 44 (8d10) Energy damage. *Success:* Half damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Phasing (Recharge 6). The assassin activates environmental refractors, becoming Invisible for up to 1 minute, with the condition ending early if the assassin makes an attack roll.

MARA YAMA BRUTE

LARGE CELESTIAL

AC 18 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 304 (32d10 + 128)
Speed 20 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+10	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	18	+4	+4
INT	18	+4	+9	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	9	-1	-1

Skills Athletics +10

Vulnerabilities Sonic

Resistances Acid, Cold, Heat, Radiation

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Mara Yama

CR 14 (XP 11,500; PB +5)

TRAITS

Environment Suit. The brute wears a fully sealed environmental suit and can survive in almost any environment. The brute doesn't need to breathe while wearing the suit and it provides protection against a vacuum for up to 12 hours.

Regeneration. The brute regains 10 Hit Points at the start of its turn. If the brute takes Sonic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the brute's next turn. The brute dies only if it starts its turn with 0 Hit Points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brute makes two Claw attacks and one Bite attack.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) Slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 24 (3d12 + 5) Piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Discharge Pheromones. *Trigger:* A creature within 60 feet of the brute deals damage to it. *Response—Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 19, the triggering creature. *Failure:* The target has the Frightened condition for 1 minute and while Frightened they also have the Poisoned condition. *Success:* The target is immune to the brute's Discharge Pheromones for 24 hours.



CHANGELINGS

A diverse range of species populate the Cluster, and most of them didn't arise naturally. They were created.



ARKAVIR CHANGELINGS

ARKAVIR CHANGELINGS

The Enduring

PABLO MUNOZ

>>>> **NOT ALL THE WORLDS OF THE CENTAURI CLUSTER ARE** green. Some are hells unfit for human habitation—or for any Earth-approximate life. Others were once green before disaster, war, or Celestial whim transformed them into a death world. Some worlds have only limited habitable zones—around the equator, poles, oceans, underground, or up mountains, while the rest of the world is hostile. Some other places have temperatures, humidity, or other conditions no one wants to experience daily, if at all.

Yet these extreme locations have their uses. They are often sources of vast energy, rare minerals, or suitable for particular experiments. Celestials sometimes reshape such worlds or shield their dwellings against hostile conditions, but this drains even their vast resources. It's easier to adapt people than terrain—if you count Changelings as "people", which Celestials generally don't.

REPTILIAN HUMANOIDS

Arkavir vary in size, detail, and especially biochemistry. Not that most humans ever get the chance to lay eyes on them first hand, or not without a lot of protective gear. They are reptilian in aspect, stocky, and scaled. Their dermal protection is like fine mail, and they have overlapping scutes larger than a human hand. Arkavir scales grow constantly, shedding to replace the damage that they encounter on a daily basis, and serving as a repository for ingested toxins. Their heads are forward-thrusting, with spikes around the forehead, cheeks, and chin; eyes are blank due to multiple protective eyelids; blunt noses and small mouths can be sealed when needed. Their hands and feet are heavily armored, highly touch-sensitive, and lack pain receptors. When their creators provide, or they arrange it themselves, Arkavir wear heavy-duty protective gear. Just because they are naturally resilient doesn't mean they'll turn down the help.

RESILIENT, SLOW, AND STRONG

Physically stronger than humans, Arkavir are also slow. They can't exactly throw a solid punch under normal conditions, but they can carry and apply gradual pressure so you don't want to get down to grappling with one. Those in high-energy environments can burst into high-speed, high-impact activity, burning through reserves.

Their chief value is their endurance. Arkavir can survive a vast range of conditions: temperatures from 300F to -300F, acidity, alkalinity, crushing pressures, low oxygen, high radiation, and toxic chemicals. Their bio-engineering operates primarily at the protein level. An Arkavir's genetic code contains a hundred times more information than a human's, mainly for biochemical fixes to function under varying conditions. Rather than resisting the environment, the Arkavir's interior matches the conditions—hot, corrosive, etc., with cellular chemistry that thrives there. They adapt to environmental shifts within hours to days, though the process isn't pleasant. During this period, they go dormant, freezing or desiccating to a husk but reanimating when internal changes are completed. They can even survive vacuum briefly but not work in it— that's the purview of a different model of Changeling.



JULIAN CALLE

DISCARDED WORKERS

Because of the places Arkavir get sent to work in, they need a fair amount of initiative. Any supervision from Celestials or more cerebral Changelings is necessarily at a distance, often at the far end of an orbital elevator. And usually with serious decontamination measures built in because whatever the Arkavir ship out usually requires a lot of decontamination. When work concludes, the resource mined out, or need ended, benevolent Celestials may relocate them to another hellhole. Otherwise, Arkavir colonies are abandoned. They survive exile by subsisting on anything, breaking down minerals and harvesting energy from geothermal and radioactive sources. Sometimes, they escape using their own resources. While slow and simple to human eyes, Arkavir can repair and replace equipment. Building orbit-launching devices is a long but feasible task, and they can hibernate between worlds if needed.



ARKAVIR

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 15 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 20 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5	+7	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	16	+3	+5
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	11	+0	+0

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +3

Resistances Electrical, Heat, Poison, Radiation

Immunities Acid, Cold

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 30 ft.,
 Passive Perception 13

Languages Arkavir plus one other language

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Extremophile. The Arkavir can survive a variety of environmental extremes, including changes in pressure. They don't need to breathe.

ACTIONS

Punch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) Bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Toxic Release (Recharge 6). *Trigger:* Another creature the Arkavir can see ends their turn. *Response—Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 14, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on the Arkavir. *Failure:* 3 (1d6) Poison damage and the target has the Poisoned condition for 1 minute. *Success:* Half damage only.

SUSPICIOUS COMMUNITIES

Isolated Arkavir groups are usually suspicious at any first contact. Their past experience with wider interstellar civilization is unlikely to have left them trusting and open. Among the machinery they've built, they possess surprising defenses. Any human wanting to pick up where the Celestials left off may find, for example, that the catapults once used to send resources out of the gravity well are now serviceable anti-orbital defense cannons. Where Arkavir have maintained communications tech, a détente can often be negotiated. They trade harvests for luxuries, parts, and media, sometimes

ARKAVIR PROLE

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 16 Initiative +0 (10)
HP 119 (14d8 + 56)
Speed 20 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5 +7	DEX	10	+0 +0	CON	18	+4 +6
INT	12	+1 +1	WIS	14	+2 +2	CHA	12	+1 +1

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +4
Resistances Electrical, Heat, Poison, Radiation
Immunities Acid, Cold
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 30 ft., Passive Perception 14
Languages Arkavir plus one other language
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Exposure. A creature takes 7 (2d6) Radiation damage if it starts its turn within 5 feet of the prole.

Extremophile. The prole can survive a variety of environmental extremes, including changes in pressure. They don't need to breathe.

ACTIONS

Punch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) Bludgeoning damage.

Grasp. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 15). While Grappled, the target has the Restrained condition.

REACTIONS

Toxic Release (Recharge 5–6). *Trigger:* Another creature the prole can see ends their turn. *Response—Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on the prole. *Failure:* 7 (2d6) Poison damage and the target has the Poisoned condition for 1 minute. *Success:* Half damage only.

covertly if they think they can get away with it. Arkavir societies vary. Some maintain weird cults awaiting creators who abandoned them a millennium ago. Others, cut off by electromagnetic storms, revert to hunter-gatherer societies at stone-age levels. Meanwhile, some adapt their factories and refineries into cities, prospering in ways their makers never intended.

Humans find Arkavir slow, stubborn, and unhelpful, while Arkavir find humans rushed, intemperate, and fragile. Arkavir value efficiency and fair trade, not favors. They seek immediate reciprocity and don't trust delayed benefits. Claims of earning Arkavir friendship are naive; their environments shape them to demand equitable exchanges. While they rarely swindle, they don't do favors.

RADIOACTIVE

Arkavir loose in the Centauri Cluster, traveling between worlds on practical, ugly ships, often pose a serious problem—not due to attitude but their baggage. They carry the conditions of their home worlds into space. Many Arkavir ships are radioactive, unsuitable for docking at stations or landing on planets. Others hold toxic or corrosive atmospheres, lethal to humans. Sometimes Arkavir don't understand these dangers, as adapting to new environments is second nature to them. Those who do understand might build hazardous-material armor to contain, not exclude, dangerous substances. Others prefer not to adapt, stubbornly insisting others adapt to them instead.

HARD TO KILL

Orbital authorities occasionally respond to Arkavir with force, often disastrously. They are a Changeling species you don't want to go to war with. Arkavir can survive vacuum, as noted. Although physical trauma can still kill them, many other lethal things won't. They can also survive unprotected orbital re-entry. Destroying their ship over your world may lead to an unplanned invasion of angry radioactive Changelings.

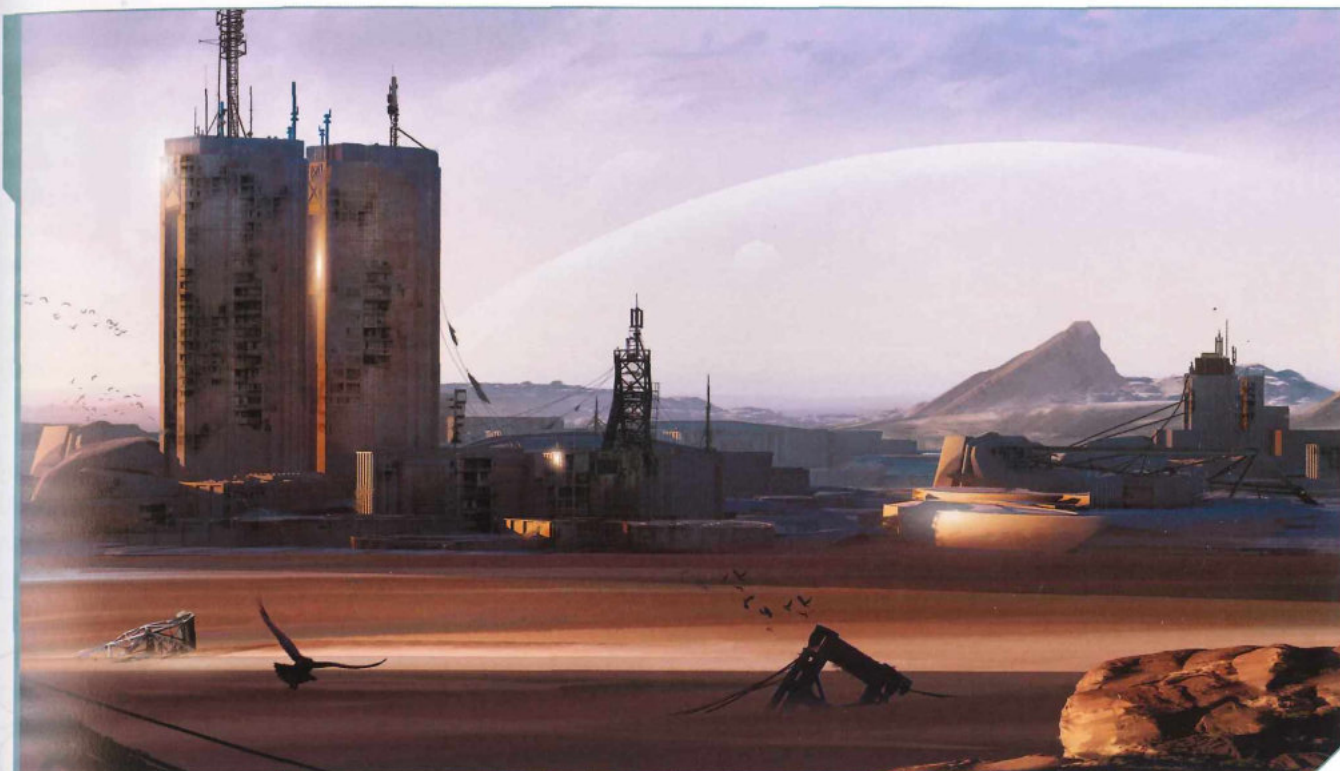
On some worlds, communities of Arkavir have been welcomed in, and mostly this is because there is some hazardous work that needs doing, and they're seen as cheaper than using human or mechanical labor. The mistake is underestimating them. History shows Arkavir know when they're being exploited. When local administrations try turning them into forced labor, rebellions occur. Arkavir on-planet is a problem nobody wants to deal with. If they decide to make a violent point of protest, they're admirably equipped to survive being ground zero for a great many things that would obliterate an entire human city.



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GATH CHANGELINGS

The Strong



>>>> THE FIRST HUMANS TO ARRIVE IN THE CLUSTER AND DISCOVER

advanced Celestial civilizations already neck-deep in millennia of history and development can be forgiven for thinking that they had stumbled upon the truly alien. Of course, we figured out the truth soon enough. Celestials were us—or rather, what we end up as after hundreds of thousands of years of evolution and genetic tinkering. From there it was pretty easy to infer that the various Changeling species that the Celestials utilized had roots in Earth stock as well. You can see those traces clearly in the less bizarre of them—remainders of animal features or, more disturbingly, human characteristics. But for the most part, it is easy to look at Changelings as something entirely foreign and new. Easy then, also, to put the uncomfortable implications of their possible origins as humans or Awakened out of mind. Easy, often, to ignore the ethical quandaries of creating lifeforms with varying degrees of sentience for the sole purpose of exploitation—plenty of human groups have embraced the use of Changelings or have at least grown to overlook them as an unquestioned feature of Celestial society. The Gath make all that much more difficult.

Plenty of Changelings invoke negative emotions in people. Some are so grotesque, strange, and unfamiliar that discomfort is a natural reaction—fear is a survival instinct in the face of the unknown after all. But the Gath provoke discomfort not because they appear strange, but because they look very, very familiar. They look like us.

From what we can figure, the Gath are the result of some Celestial culture or another doing some minor fiddling with human genetics and then calling it a day. Gath have human bodies and features, the only thing that marks them as different from the rest of us is their exceptionally strong and durable physique and altered neurology. They were likely created to be a cheap, obedient labor force, primarily in agriculture and that's mostly how they are still used by the Dominions today, though some cities employ them as clean-up crews.

HEAVY LIFTERS

A Gath's heavy musculature allows them to lift substantial loads—usually far more than even a human strongman could manage—and they have considerable stamina, able to work long hours without rest. They eat proportionally to their size and, when allowed, spend most of their time sleeping. Gath neurology is designed for low IQ and docility. Their cognition level is equivalent to that of an average ten-year-old human child. Any machinery they operate must be basic, with instructions written out in simple, precise terms. Assuming, of course, that the Gath in question has been taught to read at all. It is more common for instructions to be laid out in plain symbols.

As a result of their edited neurology, Gath are for the most part quick to trust, eager to please, and almost devoid of aggression. From an economic aspect they are as viable as basic-model civic service constructs, which leads to their extensive exploitation.

No one is entirely sure just who is responsible for the creation of the Gath. But at this point they are fairly ubiquitous throughout the Cluster, being found most commonly on Celestial worlds with strong agricultural industries. Even on these worlds, however, Gath populations tend to be low. Whether by design or as an incidental side effect of their altered physique, most Gath are sterile or otherwise have difficulty reproducing.

RIVALS, ALLIES, OR SOMETHING ELSE?

As one might guess, the initial human reaction to the existence of the Gath was overwhelmingly negative. After all, if the thing that looked most similar to us in these strange new worlds was treated an exploitable labor source ... well, that initial fear wasn't far off the mark in a lot of cases.

Plenty of Celestials view humans as little more than slightly more intelligent and much more irritating Gath, and numerous Dominions have welcomed human settlers only to turn around and work them to the bone, whether through coercion or force. Sometimes humans find themselves even worse off than the Gath. After all, we bring little to the table in comparison when it comes to strength and stamina. Next to Changelings and constructs, there isn't much of an incentive to keep us around as a potential workforce. There are also plenty of horror stories of human colonies being abducted and used as base stock for a new generation of Gath—though there hasn't been much credibility to any of these claims.

For the human settlements that have carved out a place among the Celestial Dominions, the correct treatment of Gath tends to be a contentious and continuous issue. In most cases, there is no such thing as legal ownership of Gath. However, many human societies permit them to be "adopted" as one might a cat or dog, offering food and housing in exchange for labor. Businesses are also permitted to adopt Gath as wards, though often they must prove the Gath in question agreed to the contract of their own will—given the Gath's natural disposition toward trust, this is rarely difficult to obtain. Once part of a household or registered labor crew for a company, they have little practical protection from being overworked. Charities and refuges for abused Gath are found in most human towns, as can advocacy groups calling for more rigorous protections.

GATH COMMUNITIES

While rare, there have been a few documented cases of isolated Gath communities being discovered throughout the Cluster, seemingly abandoned by their Celestial overseers. For the most part, these communities have fared remarkably well—having had the good fortune to be left behind with a considerable amount of agricultural equipment and knowledge on fertile worlds well suited to farming. Though some floundered in the absence of the leadership they were accustomed to, it seems that Gath still retain that stubborn human will to survive and adapt against the odds. Though isolated Gath societies might seem extremely crude and unsophisticated to us, they often demonstrate a remarkable capacity for self-advancement.

If left alone for just a few generations under conditions that encourage change, a Gath community begins to produce individuals with a much more complex neurology than their forebearers. These individuals often go on to be inventors and leaders, developing new means of improving life for their people. It should be noted that this isn't to say that the average Gath is by any means stupid. Certainly, their IQ is low by design and their relentless good-naturedness is easily mistaken for childish naivety. But anyone who has spent any extended period with the Gath knows that they possess an uncanny degree of intuition. They are exceptionally observant and though trusting by nature, they aren't unquestioningly loyal.

Fortunately for those who would treat the Gath poorly, these Changelings very rarely resort to violence or even express any kind of aggression at all. Instead, a Gath who has decided that enough is enough will simply leave. There is ample evidence to suggest that some of the isolated Gath communities that have been documented might have been formed by Gath who were unhappy with their circumstances and chose to walk away.

Uncomfortable for us as their existence might be, the Gath won't be disappearing anytime soon. And who knows, if left long enough to their own devices the Gath might simply revert to the human stock they came from. Or, perhaps, they will change in new and different ways, becoming yet another Celestial species for us to contend with amid the many worlds of the Cluster.



GATH

LARGE CHANGELING

AC 13 Initiative +0 (10)
HP 25 (3d10 + 9)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4 +6	DEX	10	+0 +0	CON	16	+3 +5
INT	9	-1 -1	WIS	12	+1 +1	CHA	10	+0 +0

Skills Insight +3, Mechanics +3
Senses Passive Perception 11
Languages Standard
CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Unarmed Strike. Melee Attack Roll: +6, reach 5 ft. Hit: 9 (2d4 + 4) Bludgeoning damage.

Defensive Posture. The Gath takes the Dodge action and has Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage until the start of its next turn.



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PABLO MONDZ

DIFFERENT CELESTIAL CULTURES

have had many reasons to create fighting Changelings, and many varying criteria for the ideal combat-capable servant. For some this has meant obedience, for others, savagery, endurance, or a facility with complex weapons and equipment. Alternatively, while Changeling troops can never match the generation speed of the mass-produced Remnant soldiers of the old wars, species that reproduce quickly and live cheaply, regardless of actual fighting spirit, also have their place when Celestial diplomacy fails.

THE GLADIATORS

The Gyand were made for a different kind of fighting. Mere gladiatorial spectacle is less common than you might think, among those Celestial cultures humans have encountered. If you dig a little, though, you find it's a phase many of them have moved in and out of, depending on just how bored and jaded they get with other entertainments. When your godlike technology allows mere whim to overcome life's everyday problems, sometimes the only way to get the blood flowing is to see some blood flowing. The Gyand are the product of one Dominion or another passing through such a phase, during which they had time to design a species to be a really good gladiator. They'd have the creatures fight each other, or engineered monsters, or actual Celestial duelists kitted out with every advantage their technology could gift them. And, if records are to be believed, the Celestials didn't always win.

KILLING MACHINES

A Gyand clocks in at slightly over 6 feet tall, a little broader than the average human of the same height but considerably heavier. Their physiology partakes of the vertebrate and the arthropod. They have a light, strong endoskeleton and an armored exoskeleton, and use both for support and muscular attachment, allowing them to combine flexibility and raw strength. They have eight limbs. The lower four, jutting in an X-pattern from their pelvis, allow them to skitter rapidly in any direction. The middle two are slender, three-fingered and held close to the body out of harm's way when they fight. The top

two are the monstrous daggered clubs of their fighting arms, held ratcheted back by tightly-wound muscles in their barrel chests until something steps within range. The striking speed of a Gyand can reach around 200 miles per hour, using a mechanism more like the release of a biological crossbow than a human arm. The Gyand pair this with a specialized lobe of their brains dedicated to tracking the space within reach of their killing arms and registering movement there. Gyand require a prepared act of will, not to strike anything intruding into that region. Even exchange of genetic material occurs back-to-back to stop the prospective parents killing one another.

POOR SOLDIERS

Given the usual turns of human and Celestial history, there have been attempts to use Gyand as soldiers in real wars, with mixed results. They are unparalleled close-in fighters and are good at taking breaches or the sort of vicious close boarding actions that sometimes occur between ships. It's possible to fit their fighting arms with ranged weapons, too. Tactical use of Gyand is, frankly, messy, and those would-be generals who've tried it have often ended up frustrated by the single-minded intensity of their troops. They aren't team players, even with—especially with—other Gyand. They can destroy a lot of delicate things you might need later, especially on a ship. They are far less conditioned to obey instructions than most Changeling breeds, given their original purpose was just being slung out into a fighting ring where their instincts could take over. The secondary Gyand arms, though dexterous, are never used for fighting, not even with ranged weapons. Their operation is controlled by brain areas cut off from their deadly reflexes, and Gyand called on to pull a trigger with the fingers of those hands do so with a clumsy hesitation a world away from their usual split-second strikes.

You still find Gyand in fighting pits across the Cluster—most often seedy dives operated by humans these days, rather than Celestial spectacles. Left with nothing else, they will do their level best to annihilate anything put in front of them. To sink into that kind of mindless demolition is to them what morose depression is to an imprisoned human. It is their nature, but it isn't necessarily what they want. There are populations of Gyand on many planets across the Cluster, left over from wars or building anew in the shadow of fallen colosseums. Caught on the twin prongs of their instincts and their psychology, they tend to develop in one of two ways.

WARLORDS

What most humans might expect to find is a feudal warlord culture, and variations on this theme are certainly a common experience where the species is to be found. Strong Gyand dominate weaker Gyand in a constant round of feuding and clashes between sub-groups. Leaders hold court with their subordinates sitting turned away from them, each tier of their social pyramid within the killing reach of those above. The lowest caste, which perform the basic chores of maintaining technology or growing

food, are declawed entirely to ensure their subjugation. Where the warlord model is dominant, the Gyand tend to form a mosaic of small, mutually hostile states constantly up in arms against each other. They usually destroy any technology or structures left to them sooner or later, and then build nothing new, relying on their own strength and aggression. Visitors are met with universal hostility, save when some particularly canny warlord sees a way to use them against its rivals.

CONTEMPLATIVE PHILOSOPHERS

Gyand aren't doomed to violence. When nothing stirs within their reach—when that specialized part of their brain isn't triggered—they are a calm and even philosophic species. Whether or not their creators intended it, they are more than capable of conceiving the world in non-violent ways. They can be fully, even bitterly, aware that they are designed to be slaves to their own reflexes. Many free Gyand communities live spread out over wide areas, coming together in open marketplaces and meeting areas large enough that nobody ends up in strike range of anybody else. They are meticulously careful amongst themselves, giving each other space and backing down rather than risking a triggered confrontation. Gyand voices—sounds produced by vibrating plates set high in their torsos, are low and hard to understand, and they usually supplement any conversation with a sign language using the smaller set of arms so that nobody needs to lean in to hear better. Some distanced Gyand societies rely on little more than hunting, gathering, or simple agriculture, but others maintain a teaching tradition, literacy, and technology, working very carefully alongside each other but outside of one another's trigger zones.

Humans or other creatures that blunder into these painstakingly polite societies often end up starting a chain of violent chaos that spreads through the population. More than one human explorer has taken the Gyand turning their backs as a calculated insult, rather than an attempt to maintain peace. Small wonder that many Gyand try to avoid outsiders entirely for fear of finding themselves provoked beyond their ability to control their natures.

IN THE BALANCE

There are some rare Gyand who sit somewhere between the two extremes usually encountered. They can originate in either type of society and both usually refer to themselves as "Transcendent". They are regarded by their fellows with a mixture of awe and disquiet. They are the Gyand that have mastered their

impulses, not through any physiological or neurological quirk, but simply through practice, willpower, and discipline. They can choose, in the instant, to strike or not to strike, and so they can do things their fellows can't. Transcendent Gyand seldom have a settled place in society, but travel from place to place, putting their talents at the disposal of the locals or else dispensing violence or restraint as they see fit.

Sometimes they are heroes defying and unseating warlords. Sometimes they are roving brigands and killers leaving a trail of chaos in their wake. In the alternative, some become teachers, leading pseudo-monastic schools where they pass on the complex mindfulness techniques that permit them to overcome their instinctive natures. Transcendent Gyand are also well-placed to stand between their fellows and any outsiders, often being recruited as intermediaries and ambassadors. They have been known to live amongst strangers, too. Some human settlements use their fearful reputation to keep the peace, making them something like a sheriff or hunter of fugitives. There are even human ships that have taken Gyand out into the wider Cluster. A transcendent Gyand equipped with a pair of ranged weapons modified to fit its killing arms is a terrifying gunfighter.

GYAND

LARGE CHANGELING

AC 19 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 85 (9d10 + 36)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+7	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	19	+4	+7
INT	9	-1	-1	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	7	-2	-2

Skills Perception +6
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 16
Languages Gyand plus one other language
CR 5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)

TRAITS

Reflexive. The Gyand can take up to two Reactions per round but only one per turn. They must make an Opportunity Attack if one is available.

Standing Leap. The Gyand's Long Jump is up to 30 feet and its High Jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Gyand makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) Piercing damage.

GYAND WARLORD

LARGE CHANGELING

AC 20 **Initiative** +6 (16)
HP 133 (14d10 + 56)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR 20	+5	+8	DEX 17	+3	+3	CON 19	+4	+7
INT 11	+0	+0	WIS 11	+0	+0	CHA 12	+1	+1

Skills Perception +6
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft.,
 Passive Perception 16
Languages Gyand plus one other language
CR 8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

TRAITS

Reflexive. The warlord can take up to two Reactions each round, but only one per turn.

Standing Leap. The warlord's Long Jump is up to 30 feet and its High Jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The warlord makes three Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) Piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Battle Pheromonic. *Trigger:* The warlord is hit with an attack. *Response:* Until the end of the warlord's next turn, the warlord and all other allied Gyand within 30 feet of the warlord have Advantage on all attack rolls.



HOLOSIEM CHANGELINGS

HOLOSIEM CHANGELINGS

The Data Custodians

PABLO MUÑOZ

>>>> MULTIPLE DOMINIONS AND CULTURES USE

Holosiem today, so that their original creators are lost in the Cluster's tangled and oft-rewritten history. Human scholars suspect that whichever civilization first engineered the "custodians"—a translation of their own term for themselves—lies fallen among the many lost lineages of Celestials. Although several of the Crown Dominions claim a proprietary interest in the species, the precise engineering and genetic sleights of hand that created the Holosiem are distinct from anything to be found amongst other Changeling breeds. They are a strange and artificial species.

The chief function of the Holosiem is as self-organizing repositories of data. They deal with figures, facts, and cold information which their augmented minds catalogue and cross-reference so that they are constantly ready with the appropriate statistic or definition. The traditional place for a Holosiem is crouched at their owner's feet, often chained by the neck by a collar that doles out chastisement if the creature is slow or evasive in its answers. Compared to most Changelings, they make unwilling servants—another indication that their current masters aren't their original makers.

A secondary-stage Holosiem—the most common type encountered—is around half the size of a human, thin and spindly, and shaped something like a monkey. Their skins are chalky with a metallic sheen, their bodies uneven with what look like tumorous lumps, which become only more pronounced as they grow older and move towards their tertiary life cycle stage. Inside, they are an unsurpassed miracle of bioengineering.

ULTIMATE HACKERS

Holosiem contain organs known as nanochondria, not yet successfully cultivated independently, which serve them as molecular printers. As the Holosiem takes in data, these organs build storage and processing centers within them that they can link to and use to hold, sort, and analyze information. They are biological computers, in effect, of extraordinary compact efficiency and Holosiem diets tend to include a lot of inorganic elements and heavy metals to fuel these inner constructs.

Their whiplike appendages are powerful antennae that transmit and receive information from any nearby source that isn't heavily reinforced against intrusion. They can even use their nanochondria to construct temporary echo-processors that copy the activity of nearby systems, allowing the real-time reading and modelling of systems without triggering any intrusion countermeasures. These echo-systems permit them to effortlessly second-guess encryption

and security systems. Trying to keep Holosiem out of anything other than a totally isolated and shielded system is a nightmare.

These internal datastores also serve as repositories for the persona of the Holosiem, which is stored as encoded data that can be copied and transmitted to others of its kind. This permits a mental longevity very different to the mindline transmission of the Imperial Dominions, albeit one which precludes the strong sense of continuous self that Celestials value so much.

DESTRUCTIVE EMP

Whoever originally made the Holosiem certainly intended them to be able to keep secrets. Despite their unsettling appearance they are no physical danger to a human or Celestial, nor particularly able to endure harm or coercion. Under threat they resort to a one-off defense mechanism with serious repercussions for both the Holosiem and any electronic kit nearby. In extremis they liquidate their internal datastores in a catastrophic EMP cascade that implants aggressive viral routines into every receptive system in reach, shutting systems down, corrupting memory, or turning machines against their owners. The process is fatal for the Holosiem, but the broadcast also includes encoded elements of the individual's stored data and personality. Other Holosiem nearby can catch these and encode them into newly created storage organs, taking on the knowledge of the dead Holosiem along with elements of its personality. Such a catch inevitably progresses the creature towards the next stage in the species' curious life cycle.

LIFE-CYCLE STAGES

A first-stage Holosiem looks something like a maggot. They must be tended constantly, fed particular diets, and kept within a strict range of temperatures. After around six months they pupate into the more familiar simian secondary-stage that most humans—those who have met them at all—are familiar with. A secondary-stage Holosiem emerges mindless, and its troupe-mates copy over elements of their own natures, resulting in a new arrival that is a composite of all its fellows, instantly aware of its place amongst them and within the wider universe. Over time, a Holosiem accumulates more data, including copied personality elements from others of its kind. When two troupes meet, they engage in a mutual transfer of information and persona-fragments, much as more natural species maintain genetic diversity. As Holosiem accumulate these dense knots of data they develop expanded inner storage to hold them, becoming bulkier with age. Elder Holosiem are less mobile, cared for by

their younger troupe-mates, and entering the third stage of their life cycle as they become entirely sedentary. Eventually, once they reach a critical threshold of stored information, they break apart, their bodies disintegrating into a brood of grublike first stage Holosiem that each holds a fragment of their stored information. This is the only way that new Holosiem arise.

Whether or not the Holosiem were compliant to their original creators, they are certainly unruly servants now. Enough so that, while many noble Celestials maintain the breed amongst their menageries, the majority that humans encounter are rogues trying to evade servitude to anybody. Encountering a Holosiem troupe in the wild is a dangerous prospect, not because they are physically threatening but because if they want to travel between planets they are known to hack into and hijack ships, locking the crew away for the duration—or worse. While seldom actively malevolent, they were not designed to accommodate empathy. In general, the most positive human interactions with Holosiem are where there's a Celestial presence for both to unite against. Those Holosiem troupes which have escaped Celestial control are generally hostile towards their former masters to the extent of choosing sabotage-suicide rather than being recaptured.

MACHINE INTELLIGENCE

Holosiem personalities are very alien from a human standpoint. Unlike some Changeling breeds they are more than capable of complex high-level thinking and analysis. A resting Holosiem might simply hold data that has no meaning to it but, when analysis is called for, it creates temporary analytical organs that give it a razor keen understanding of the context and relevance of the information it holds. In general, Holosiem have less of a sense of self and individuality than most sapient entities. They are the sum of their data combined with a sense of belonging to their kin. Their ability to disperse to other Holosiem on death, or just copy parts of themselves in life, means that their attitudes towards individuality, survival, and posterity are very different from humans. The individual isn't important, even

to the individual. The troupe is all. To a human, dealing with the Holosiem is a lot like dealing with a machine intelligence. There is something sentient there that makes acute value judgments and draws conclusions, but falls short of a coherent personality.

Rogue bands of Holosiem represent vast libraries of clandestine information, and their nature drives them to constantly gather and encyst more within themselves. They curate libraries of secrets and form networks of shadowy information-brokers. They understand that this is their leverage in a complex universe and use data to buy security and resources. Humans who understand their peculiar nature can enter mutually profitable arrangements with them. Across the Cluster there are gangs, security forces, and academic institutions who know where to go when they need help learning something new or to have problematic information digested and analyzed.



PABLO MUÑOZ

HIDDEN COMMUNITIES

Where Holoziem live alongside humans it is frequently as entirely hidden communities. They alter local surveillance and communications to overlook them and expunge any records of their existence. The majority of their neighbors never know the Holoziem are there. Holoziem are physically weak and fragile but can still pose a considerable danger when threatened. Their preferred means of defense is to infiltrate and co-opt nearby electronic systems. These might be security drones or gun emplacements where such things are available, but they can wreak considerable havoc simply by suborning domestic systems and turning them to hostile use. Vehicles, atmosphere processors, climate control, power grids, and the like all become impromptu weapons if the Holoziem are discovered and threatened, and it is very rare to find them ensconced where such resources aren't available to them. Their aim in a confrontation is almost always to just take their elders and young and flee.

As to what the Holoziem want, other than continued survival, opinions are divided. Those who have dealt with them for protracted periods of time report that established troupes certainly seem to have some long-term aim, and they are often in contact with others elsewhere on that world, system, or beyond in the wider Cluster. Being creatures of data and only a loose sense of self, it is challenging to understand what the Holoziem are trying to accomplish. They can be relied upon to oppose Celestial machinations wherever they can get away with it, and to work towards their own survival, and where those aims don't clash with human goals, they can be very useful partners. Beyond that, humans tend to come away with an unsettled sense that the Changelings have a grander long-term plan that is completely opaque.

AVERSION TO REMNANTS

Various dead Celestial civilizations have been proposed as the creators of the Holoziem, and some speculate that the secret to interacting with various Remnant technologies are held within the species' vast and distributed repository of data. The Holoziem themselves appear to have a strong aversion to anything to do with any Remnant technology, becoming agitated at the very suggestion and even activating their last-ditch data-detonation rather than be forced to interact with it. All of which should suggest that either they take the Elohim's prohibition very seriously, or else they have their own negative history with the things. Except that there are always odd reports of Holoziem troupes seen near known Remnant worlds and wrecks—reports that are frequently entirely erased when anyone else

tries to locate them. In particular they seem to have a covert interest in ancient military facilities left over from the ancient inter-Celestial wars. Given the species' ability to suborn technology, a few people worry that the wider Holoziem plan involves a mass resurrection of Remnant armies under their control, so that they can lead their artificial hosts against the Celestial Dominions and reshape the entire face of the Centauri Cluster.

Which is plainly nothing but paranoia. Obviously.

HOLOSIEM

SMALL CHANGELING

AC 11 **Initiative** -1 (9)
HP 35 (10d6)
Speed 20 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	8	-1	-1	DEX	8	-1	-1	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	22	+6	+8	WIS	14	+2	+4	CHA	13	+1	+1

Skills History +10, Perception +6
Senses Passive Perception 16
Languages All
CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Living Database. The Holoziem are essentially biological computers and can store vast quantities of information, which can be easily accessed by individuals with the proper tools.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +1, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 1) Slashing damage.

Hack. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 16 (Disadvantage), one Construct that the Holoziem can see within 30 feet of itself. *Failure:* The target has the Dominated condition until the Holoziem dies. The Dominated target is under the Holoziem's control, can't take Reactions, and can communicate with the Holoziem within a 1-mile radius. The Holoziem can Hack up to 10 targets at one time.

REACTIONS

Data-Detonation. *Trigger:* After taking damage, the Holoziem can decide to self-destruct, emitting a dangerous EMP burst as it dies. *Response—Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 16, every creature and object in a 120-foot-radius Sphere. *Failure:* 28 (8d6) Sonic damage. If not outright destroyed, objects that require power, including Constructs, no longer function until restarted, a process that takes 1 minute. *Success:* Half damage.



ITINKASI CHANGELINGS

ITINKASI CHANGELINGS

The Overseers

PABLO MUÑOZ

>>>> CELESTIALS' ATTITUDES TO

newly arrived humans varies wildly. Some are simply too alien to really register humans as relevant. Whist their actions still impact the latecomers from Earth, they are unlikely to notice us and unable to care. Other Celestials can “lower” themselves and speak to humans at a mutually comprehensible level. Though not, of course, as equals.

There is a band of Celestial cultures between these extremes, though. Those who register the existence of humans and have potential uses for us, or harbor curiosity about us, but are no more able to sit down and converse with us than we are with an unAwakened animal. We can observe a rat or a bug scurrying about, after all, and perhaps want to feed it or study it or find a way of excluding it from our home, but we're not going to discuss philosophy with it any time soon.

The Ossif Dominion falls into this category. We don't understand them. They build things, on a planetary scale, but without wreaking havoc on the planets they choose as canvases. Their grand orbital sculptures are works in progress that evidently take many centuries—or perhaps they can never be completed, and the act of creation is the end in itself. Idle conjecture throws up the possibility that they completely enclose worlds and then somehow remove them from the physical universe or tow them away from their orbits to tumble like bone dice in the vastness between stars.

The Ossif themselves have a mental architecture as weird as their vast engineering projects. They think slowly and at a vast scale and seem incapable of interacting meaningfully with anything like humans. And yet, after humanity had colonized several of their worlds for a generation or two, they evidently became aware of our presence and developed an interest in us. Their solution was to offhandedly create an entirely new species to act as a bridge between them and us. Hence the Cluster's newest breed of Changeling was born.

CELESTIAL OVERSEERS

The Itinkasi are no longer a uniquely Ossif feature. Other Celestial species have abstracted the design and bred their own for the same purpose of interacting with humans. Some because, like the Ossif, they find humans very difficult to comprehend or care about and require a proxy. Others because—we suspect—they enjoy the extreme discomfort the Itinkasi cause in people.

Itinkasi, also known as overseers, are humanoid, long-bodied, and long-limbed so that if they stood straight, they'd be tall. Their typical pose is a bandy-legged crouch, though, or else hanging from something. Their hands are long-fingered and human-like and their feet are exactly like their hands. Their joints have far more freedom of movement than ours. Their necks are long and mobile. It's not uncommon to meet one hanging upside down but with its face—we'll get to that face in a moment—turned right way up.

ULTIMATE LINGUISTS

Itinkasi brains and senses are powerfully keyed to pick up linguistic, facial, and social cues. They are born as blank slates, but infant overseers usually understand and interact with their Celestial masters in a matter of weeks, by which time they are also physically independent. They grow to full size and capability in the same time it takes a human infant to start walking. Itinkasi are predesigned to be technologically sophisticated, quickly picking up the use of whatever toys and tools their masters allow them. Soon after their incredibly steep growth curve leads to maturity, they are ready to be exposed to other species.

An Itinkasi that has never met a human before can pick up a language after a few hours of listening and be speaking it back quite clearly by the end of the day. In that time, they'll also have assimilated body language, tone, and subtext, and have a good eye for relative status and relationships between individuals. Given access to a settlement's communications they'll quickly pick up memes, social context, topics of local interest, and customs. Their creators gave them every possible tool with which to fit right in. And they don't.

UNSETTLING CHAMELEONS

Dealing with one of the overseers is a profoundly disquieting experience because they learn humans very well, but seldom have any interest in acting like one. They might be less than the Celestials that created them, but they very clearly feel that they occupy a stratum above that of the inferior species they are sent as go-betweens to. An Itinkasi's flexible form can mimic human movements and mannerisms very well. They seldom care to do so unless it is to set someone up for an unpleasant surprise later on. Instead, they seem to delight in discomforting those they interact with, twisting their bodies into parodies of the people they speak with, or conducting whole conversations while hanging like an ape. And worst of all are their faces.

The general rubberiness of the Itinkasi is most on show with their facial features. At rest they have two small eyes with a slash of a mouth set directly between them and no nose at all. As they interact with a human,



their putty-like visage twists and deforms, growing contours and definition so that they can better express themselves. You might find the twisted faces of friends and family rising to the surface of the Changeling's visage, conjured up as though by automatic reflex when the creature thinks or talks of them. They can mimic voices, too. Having an overseer threaten a loved one while using their own face and tones isn't an experience anybody looks forward to.

TASK MASTERS

Why the threats, though? The Itinkasi are called overseers because most of the time their Celestial lieges want the humans within their domain to do something. It might be some kind of resource gathering work, on the basis that if humans are going to be somewhere they may as well make themselves useful and mine or harvest. Alternatively, the task may be entirely incomprehensible—recording trivial but time-consuming data, constructing baffling edifices, relocating to some distant but functionally identical spot on the world.

The Ossif demand humans on their worlds construct complex ambulatory machine-structures powered by the wind, that are then released to roam the planet until they wear out and break down. Overseers are seldom interested in the why of it, just in ensuring that the tasks get done. Where the resident humans refuse the Celestial requests, then additional overseers usually turn up accompanied by more martial Changelings, or some other display of Celestial power. They enjoy that kind of thing, as far as anyone can tell.

It's not that overseers are evil, exactly. As with most Changelings, they are designed to feel rewarded by carrying out their intended

tasks. Something in their initial engineering by the Ossif—perhaps the Ossif's inability to comprehend human minds—means that to an overseer, people have to be manipulated, intimidated, or coerced into doing things. The idea that they could just be open or trade or make requests doesn't seem to come easily to them, nor satisfy their internal ledger of whether they've done their jobs properly. This kind of attitude isn't unique amongst Changelings or Celestials, but with the Itinkasi it's paired with a very keen understanding of how to put the screws on a human mind. They are—perhaps inadvertently—engineered to feel rewarded when they make people into unhappy subordinates. In its simplest form this manifests in individual overseers wrong-footing humans in conversation, playing power games, and singling out vulnerabilities and weaknesses. In situations where the human-overseer "relationship" has been going on for a while, they may have built a whole power structure of humans and other Changelings around themselves, gathering secrets and information for extortion, sending out thugs, and in general acting like a criminal overlord in the name of getting their masters' work done.

SOLITARY BEINGS

Being a new addition to the Celestial toolkit, Itinkasi generally don't have an independent culture. They appear to be parthenogenetic, and their rapid development means they divest themselves of their offspring shortly after birth. You seldom see two of them in the same place, and almost always as rivals. Itinkasi flat out hate each other, frankly. They are designed to deal with humans and other fixed individuals. Facing another of their own kind can lead to a weird copycat feedback loop where each tries to outdo the other with grotesque expressions and attitudes.

It's possible to come across the occasional independent overseer. Sometimes they are simply cut off from their Celestial masters, but others do go rogue. Their ability to learn humans means they are exposed to a lot of temptations, a slippery slope where they get lost in their manipulations and games and lose sight of the actual point of it all. Lone Itinkasi usually surround themselves with servants whom they've broken to their will with threats, emotional extortion, and hollow promises. They are experts in trapping others in abusive, exploitative relationships that appear hopeless and inescapable to their victims. Others, at least theoretically less damaging, can find a powerful human to serve, taking up position as a majordomo or manager, any role that gives them underlings to exercise power over. Their keen eye for the tells and tics of others means they also find employment with police departments—especially those less concerned with justice than punishing enemies of the local regime—shadowy security agencies, and law firms.

ITINKASI

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 14 **Initiative** +3 (13)

HP 99 (18d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	10	+0	+0	DEX	16	+3	+5	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	16	+3	+5	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Deception +4, Insight +2, Stealth +5

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages All

CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Perfect Mimic. The Itinkasi can perfectly mimic a Human if it spends at least 1 hour observing it. It can mimic mannerisms, accents, languages, and physical attributes. If it observes the target interacting with others, it can also mimic the interactions and relationships of that target.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Itinkasi can use Imitate, if available, and then makes two attacks, using Claw or Dazzles in any combination.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) Slashing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 13).

Dazzles. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature in a 10-foot Sphere centered around a location within 30 feet of the Itinkasi. *Failure:* 7 (2d6) Heat damage and the target has the Blinded condition until the end of their next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.

Imitate (Recharge 4–6). The Itinkasi targets a Medium-sized Human it can see within 30 feet and becomes an exact physical copy of the target. While the Itinkasi is imitating a target, the target has Disadvantage on all attacks targeting the Itinkasi, and the Itinkasi has Advantage on all attacks against the target. When the Itinkasi imitates a different target, it loses the benefits of its previous target.

REACTIONS

Disorient. *Trigger:* The Itinkasi uses Imitate on a target. *Response—Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 13, the target of Imitate. *Failure:* The target has the Dominated condition for 1 minute. At the end of each of their turns, the target can reroll the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the Itinkasi uses Imitate on a different target, then this target is no longer Dominated.



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>>>> THE GREAT NOBLES OF THE CROWN DOMINIONS

have designed lives of security and comfort for themselves. Serious war between their polities is a far-fetched proposition and their political maneuverings are sufficiently elegant that it's rare for them to face an outright assassination attempt.

Rare, but not unknown. And the greatest of the Imperial Celestials have the most to lose, long mind-lines of experience and social place that one mishap could bring to an untimely end. Add to this the fact that they grow jaded after too long coddled in layers and layers of safety and convenience. Why else do the scions of their great lines take up the mantle of knights (as humans have come to refer to them) or hunt fantastical creatures, or engage in a variety of other pastimes that bring danger back into their lives? Why else, too, deal with upstart humans who don't know how their complex games are played, if not for the very unpredictability we bring into the Celestials' long lives?

Of course, just because some great lady of the Dominions fancies a little diversion, it doesn't mean she leaves herself open to the assassin's blade. There are human and Celestial and Changeling bodies to stand between the great nobles and any threat, together with the best technological defenses: shields, hidden weapons, predictive algorithms, and toxin detectors. The Kinesects add an elegant last line of defense to all of these.

ORNAMENTAL SHIELDS

Most Celestial cultures are fond of adornment as a status indicator, though their sense of what constitutes aesthetic ornament can diverge sharply from human preferences. Any given Dominion or subculture has its own unwritten rules over who wears what and the meaning of any given piece of decoration. Jewelry, in a sense comprehensible to humans, is common, though often of a fineness undreamt of by either human artisans or artificial manufacture. And some of the jewelry is alive.

Picture an elegant matriarch of the Crown Dominions in her newly youthful body. There is a tiara about her brow and a complex knotted choker about her throat, winding tendrils of gold about her arms, perhaps bejeweled segments extending down her cheeks. Nothing but the most beautiful work and the most precious materials, rare even by the standards of the Celestials' vast resources. And, as you examine it, the ornament watches you back. The gems are eyes, the elegant, segmented tracteries that adorn her are limbs. Should some threat bypass all her other security—or should

her whim place her in danger—then all that complex tangle of precious metal and glittering stones twitches into motion at a blurring speed beyond human reflexes or visual processing. She is abruptly at the center of an upraised fan of joined limbs brandishing needles and razor edges; extending delicate folding vanes that become rigid, mirrored shields, spitting darts from hidden orifices. The entire assembly is a living thing dedicated to preserving the life of its mistress.

It's rare to see a Kinesect detached from its host. Dead on the ground they are mostly a bundle of limbs. Like sea-spiders, spindly marine arthropods from Old Earth, their actual bodies are so small that most of their essential organs have been squeezed into the proximal joints of their legs. Their central mass is the size of a human fist, two at most, and usually nestles between the wearer's shoulder blades or the small of her back. Some of their limbs are many-jointed, others flexible as whips, and each Kinesect can be "worn" in a hundred different ways at the preference of its owner. They can shift their coloration through a variety of metallic and scintillating hues by adjusting the way that their exoskeletons refract light: bodyguards to go with any outfit. The one constant is usually that one element of the ensemble connects via a bracelet or ring to the wearer's neural induction point at the palm, giving the Celestial the ability to override or trigger the creature's defensive capabilities at will.

DANGEROUS KILLERS

As well as limbs, Kinesects are well-provided with a distributed net of sense organs: sight, taste, smell, and hearing. They don't sleep and are constantly alert to potential threats. For those who are aware of their existence, meeting with an Imperial Celestial can be disconcerting as you try to work out if your host's jewelry is watching you and waiting for you to cross the line. Over-enthusiastic Kinesects are definitely possible. Given the speed with which they are expected to react, it's more than possible for an innocuous gesture to be met with a lethal response. In some cases, this is inconvenient, in others the Celestial wearer finds it hilarious.

The limbs of the Kinesect are naturally equipped with a variety of deadly toys. The force they can project is based on stored kinetic energy—their limbs "at rest" are ready to lash out and held back only by organic catches, hence the blurring speed of their strikes. They contain pharmagenic organs that can produce a variety of toxins tailored to different species. Given an hour's exposure to someone admitted into their wearer's presence, their acute taste and scent organs usually gather sufficient information to concoct venom

tailored to the metabolism of a target species or even individual. These poisons are delivered by claw, or by darts fired pneumatically from adapted respiration organs. The same pharmagenesis concocts a variety of drugs to aid their wearer with blood clotting, antivenin, counter-shock, or immune system boosters. A few reckless Celestials have even hacked their own jewelry for recreational use.

SENTIENT CREATURES

Kinesects are widespread amongst several of the major polities of the Crown Dominion. Their existence and use is accepted and understood amongst them, but seldom overtly referenced, meaning that many humans who encounter them are unaware of the potential danger the glittering killers represent. Telling regular jewelry from a living Kinesect is difficult, owing both to the creatures' chameleonic abilities and a tradition of lower status Celestials wearing adornment designed to mimic living things that themselves are mimicking decoration.

It's easy to write the creatures off as little more than an automated defense system, or at best a pet, but like most Changelings the Kinesects are at least semi-sapient. At least as much as a non-Awakened dog, say. Their intelligence is highly specialized towards the task they've been designed for. Detecting and reacting to threats against their wearer is the sole problem they are concerned with solving, and in general they are very good at that but find any wider cognition challenging. Most attempts to modify them for broader functionality have met with little success, although there are occasional accounts of their being used to attack

someone in a face-to-face assassination attempt. Two Kinesects can trigger each other and engage in furious sparring, a duel to the death that their wearers are scarcely involved in.

SYMBIOTIC PROTECTORS

Openly talking about Kinesects amongst Celestials is considered bad form. The most commonly advanced reason is that the great nobles of the Crown Dominions prefer not to admit that they might even need that kind of protection. Another cause of the reticence might be that the creatures are parasites fed solely from the fluids and metabolism of their wearers via a flexible beak, an admission the Celestials might find unsavory. Kinesects are therefore entirely reliant on their host wearers, and under most circumstances are entirely helpless when separated from them. When they are permitted to reproduce, gem-like eggs are harvested and cultivated in a nursery until the juveniles are ready to be introduced to their new host. A Kinesect whose host has died can be transplanted to a new wearer, but the implication of failure means most are simply destroyed. The most highly-engineered Kinesects are genetically bound and can literally take sustenance only from a single individual or bloodline.

Amongst many Celestial houses, investing a young Celestial with a Kinesect bodyguard is a ritual of familial importance, undertaken once a particular new member of the lineage has proven fully mind-compatible with the elder whose memories they are intended to take on. Some lineages make the gift of a Kinesect part of a grand ceremony of confirmation and celebration. Others, so it is said, have traditions that are grim and private, a reminder to the newcomer that they are just a vessel awaiting filling.

Humans have come into possession of Kinesects before and can certainly make use of the poorer sort that aren't tailed to a particular wearer. The metabolic drain of supporting the living jewelry is wearying, though, and can even be fatal if the creature is put through a lot of active use. Without neural control, a human wearer can also have trouble "training" their new guardian in just what constitutes a threat. A final difficulty arises given the metabolic differences between humans and Celestials. A lot of "helpful" drugs the Kinesect might inject into its wearer are in concentrations fatally toxic to someone fresh from Earth and the arkships.





WILD KINESECTS

On a very few worlds, Kinesects are found wild. Human biologists assume that their progenitors were abandoned there, or that some Celestial lord outlived their jewelry and inadvertently bequeathed it to the local ecosystem. "Wild" Kinesects remain obligate parasites, and only survive at all where some suitable host species exists, something large and robust.

Discovering that the local grazing herbivores are invested with glittering killer baubles is an unpleasant revelation for any new settlers or explorers. Even worse when already-dangerous carnivores or winged scavengers reveal poisonous extra limbs when cornered. Elsewhere other Changeling species have provided adequate hosts for Kinesects, enduring the parasitism of the creatures and both benefitting and suffering from their proactive services.

KINESECT

TINY CHANGELING

AC 20 **Initiative** +5 (15)
HP 7 (3d4)
Speed 5 ft.

MOD				MOD				MOD			
		SAVE				SAVE				SAVE	
STR	6	-2	-2	DEX	20	+5	+7	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	6	-2	-2	WIS	10	+0	+2	CHA	3	-4	-4

Skills Insight +2, Perception +2

Immunities Blinded, Deafened, Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Prone

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Understands Imperial but can't speak

CR 1/4 (XP 50; PB +2)

TRAITS

Reactive. When attached to a host, the Kinesect can take up to three Reactions per round, but only one per turn.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Poison damage.

Dart. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, range 15/30 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) Piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) Poison damage.

REACTIONS

Distracting Perfume. *Trigger:* A creature within 10 feet of the Kinesect attacks the host. *Response—Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 15, the triggering creature. *Failure:* The target has the Stunned condition until the end of their next turn, and the Poisoned condition for 1 minute. *Success:* The target is immune to Distracting Perfume for 1 hour.

Forceful Dart. *Trigger:* A creature within 15 feet of the Kinesect attacks the host. *Response:* The Kinesect makes one Dart attack. If the attack hits, the target has the Prone condition.

Shield. *Trigger:* A creature attacks the host. *Response:* The Kinesect forms a crystalline shield, increasing its AC by 2 and its host's AC by 4 until the start of the host's turn.



COVEN CHANGELINGS

KOVEN CHANGELINGS

The Malevolent Slaves

PABLO MUÑOZ

>>>> **OF ALL THE MANY TERRORS IN THE UNIVERSE,** few match the Mara Yama in ferocity and pure hedonistic sadism. These strange Celestials have chosen to make violence and fear their tools of both trade and entertainment. The ships of the Mara Yama cruise through the darkest expanses of space, waiting for some unfortunate vessel to cross their path or catch their attention.

Once the Mara Yama have a victim between their teeth, they very rarely allow it to escape. Ships caught by a Mara Yama fleet can expect to face a boarding party full of the horrendous offspring of a cultural passion for extreme genetic and physiological modification. The Koven, as they are collectively known, are a loathsome menagerie of Changeling monsters designed by the Mara Yama to hurt and terrify their victims.

The Koven vary enormously in form and specific purpose, from mindless creatures that behave like rabid animals to highly advanced assassination units that stalk their prey with frightening intelligence. But each strain of Koven embodies in some way the putrid joy the Mara Yama take in causing suffering. Koven have been designed to breed and grow to adulthood quickly, allowing the Mara Yama to maintain a steady number of disposable soldiers. While any individual Koven is already dangerous enough, the Mara Yama often enhance their capabilities with augmented parts, creating bizarre blends of biological and mechanical features. These parts are usually uniform, the result of mass production, and installed without regard for the comfort of the Koven involved. Despite the pain they are clearly capable of feeling, however, the Koven rarely express fear. They throw themselves with abandon at opponents or obstacles against which they stand no chance of surviving.



JACKAL

The “Jackals” are a particularly short-lived breed of Koven. Their cognition is little more than that of a maddened animal, given a target by their creators or just unleashed upon an area. They attack in ravaging packs with claws, teeth, and no concern for their own survival, seemingly little threat to a disciplined force. It is in death that their major service to their creators arrives, though: Extinction triggers a catastrophic nanotechnology cascade within their bodies that transforms much of their mass into a destructive swarm of locust constructs that devour anything nearby.

JACKAL

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 14 (armor plating) **Initiative** +1 (11)

HP 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 50 ft.

	MOD		SAVE		MOD		SAVE		MOD		SAVE
STR	16	+3	+3	DEX	13	+1	+3	CON	13	+1	+1
INT	7	-2	-2	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	8	-1	-1

Skills Perception +4

Resistances Cold, Radiation

Immunities Poison

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Understands Koven and Mara Yama but can't speak

CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Destructive Death. When the jackal dies, a swarm of locust Constructs emerge, destroying all traces of the corpse. This swarm fills a 5-foot Cube and has Speed 5, AC 10, and 1 Hit Point. Any creature that starts its turn in such a swarm takes 2 (1d4) Piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) Acid damage. On Initiative count 10 of each round, a swarm moves to a location and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a success, the swarm fills an adjacent 5-foot Cube with a new swarm that behaves identically to this swarm but not acting until the next round.

The swarm damages any location it occupies. After it moves, the previous location is Difficult Terrain.

Foolhardy. Any creature attacking the jackal attacks with Advantage.

Hold Breath. The jackal can hold its breath for 10 minutes.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) Slashing damage. The jackal makes this attack with Advantage.

Chomp. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 12, one creature within 5 feet of the jackal that it can see. *Failure:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Bludgeoning damage and the target has the Restrained condition until the end of its next turn or until the jackal is Incapacitated or dead.







LOBO

Among the very least of the Mara Yama forces you might encounter are the brutes we call lobos. They represent an absolutely minimal expenditure of Celestial ingenuity and resources, and their creators throw them heedlessly into battle as a first wave of attrition and distractions. They are bred with a baseline ability to follow orders and fight but are more fire-and-forget than any great tactical asset, armed with crude

weapons because anything more sophisticated would be a waste of resources. In some cases, the Mara Yama don't even recover them at the end of a fight, leaving their bewildered, snarling minions to die on wrecked ships or hostile planets. Whilst dangerous en masse, the main reason these creatures should spark alarm is that their appearance indicates their creators are taking an interest in your location, something that should always be avoided if possible.

LOBO

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 13 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 52 (7d8 + 21)
Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. While Enraged)

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2 +4	DEX	13	+1 +1	CON	16	+3 +5
INT	9	-1 -1	WIS	10	+0 +0	CHA	9	-1 -1

Skills Perception +2
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12
Languages Koven; understands Mara Yama but can't speak it
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Bloodlust. If the lobo has fewer than 25 Hit Points, it is enraged. While enraged, the lobo's Speed increases by 10, but it must attack the closest creature on each of its turns.

Grit. While the lobo isn't enraged, all damage it takes is reduced by 2.

Hold Breath. The lobo can hold its breath for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) Piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) Slashing damage, or 11 (2d8 + 2) Slashing damage while enraged.

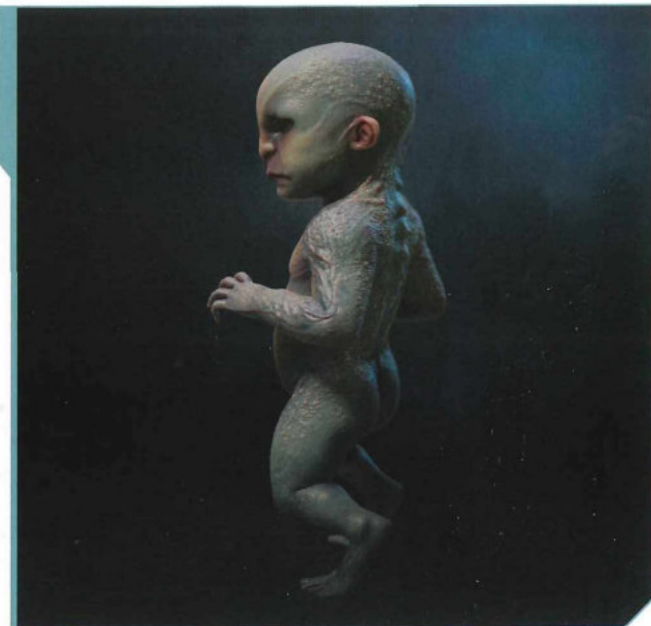
BONUS ACTIONS

Ravenous Bite (If Enraged). The lobo makes a Bite attack and if it hits it does an additional 3 (1d6) Poison damage.



MINUTE VASSAL

Minute vassals have earned their name for the way they make humans hesitate in battle. Although only the most foolish of Travelers would ever pause too long, even a few seconds of inaction means the difference between life and death when facing Koven. The Mara Yama seem to have designed minute vassals to take advantage of fallible human instincts. These Koven are remarkably child-like, with very small, soft bodies, short limbs, and large heads with expressive eyes. At first glance, they are almost evocative of a human infant. A quick double-take, however, instantly breaks this illusion, as most human children don't have deadly claws, oversized teeth, or digitigrade legs.



MINUTE VASSAL

SMALL CHANGELING

AC 15 **Initiative** +5 (15)
HP 10 (3d6)
Speed 20 ft.

MOD				SAVE				MOD				SAVE			
STR	10	+0	+2	DEX	20	+5	+5	CON	11	+0	+2	WIS	8	-1	-1
INT	8	-1	-1	CHA	8	-1	-1								

Skills Perception +1
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11
Languages Mara Yama
CR 1/4 (XP 50; PB +2)

TRAITS

Hold Breath. The minute vassal can hold its breath for 10 minutes.

Unnerving Presence. Humans have Disadvantage on attack rolls made against the minute vassal.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +2, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) Slashing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 12).

BONUS ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +2, reach 5 ft., one Grappled target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) Piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) Poison damage.

REACTIONS

Scamper. *Trigger:* A creature Grappled by the minute vassal frees itself from the grapple. *Response:* The minute vassal takes the Disengage action.



VASSAL

One of the more common Mara Yama Koven, the vassal's behavior once deployed speaks volumes about the psychology of their creators. Fresh into the fight the vassals act as disciplined and intelligent combatants making the best use of the advanced plasma beam weapons their creators provide them with. As the battle goes on, and especially as they receive injuries, they fall prey to bloodlust. Their behavior becomes erratic, their decisions progressively less rational. To a human mind this seems like a drawback. To the Mara Yama it probably constitutes entertainment.

VASSAL

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 12 **Initiative** +0 (10)

HP 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 35 ft. (45 ft. While Enraged)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+5	DEX	11	+0	+0	CON	16	+3	+5
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +2

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Koven, Mara Yama

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Bloodlust. If the vassal has fewer than 40 Hit Points, it is enraged. While enraged, the vassal's Speed increases by 10, but it must attack the closest creature on each of its turns.

Grit. While the vassal isn't enraged, all damage it takes is reduced by 2.

Hold Breath. The vassal can hold its breath for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) Slashing damage, or 14 (2d10 + 3) Slashing damage while enraged.

Plasma Rifle. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +2, range 250/500 ft. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) Energy damage.

WELCOME WARRIOR

There is rumor among Travelers of an attempt by the Mara Yama to craft a perfect Changeling, though there is little to no evidence among humans to substantiate whether these creatures are truly Koven or originate elsewhere.

Yet these rumors are true and the welcome warrior does owe its existence to the Mara Yama, but they long ago abandoned this design. Quite simply, welcome warriors don't adhere to plans, nor show the loyalty one expects of Changelings. They stand 12 feet tall and are vaguely human-like, but with arms twice the normal length and a strange face, with a mouth capable of stretching and distending wide enough to swallow a human. They quite literally consume their enemies. This is where the "welcome" in their name comes. The pitiful creatures they eat are consumed, reborn, and repurposed as new welcome warriors.



WELCOME WARRIOR

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 15 Initiative +1 (11)
HP 178 (21d8 + 84)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	19	+4 +8	DEX	13	+1 +5	CON	19	+4 +8
INT	16	+3 +3	WIS	10	+0 +0	CHA	10	+0 +0

Skills Stealth +5

Resistances Heat

Immunities Cold, Poison, Radiation; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Koven, Mara Yama

CR 10 (XP 5,900; PB +4)

TRAITS

Hold Breath. The warrior can hold its breath for 8 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The warrior makes two Clutch attacks.

Clutch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16). The warrior has two arms, each of which can grapple one target.

BONUS ACTIONS

Swallow. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature Grappled by the warrior. *Hit:* The warrior swallows the target, removing the Grappled condition on the target. The target has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside the warrior, and it takes 3 (1d6) Acid damage plus 3 (1d6) Poison damage at the start of each of its turns.

The warrior can only have one creature swallowed at a time and while a swallowed creature is inside of it, the warrior's movement is reduced by 10 feet. While the warrior lives, if a creature that is swallowed dies, it is reborn 24 hours later as a new **Welcome Warrior**.

If the warrior dies, the swallowed creature falls in a space within 5 feet of the warrior and has the Prone condition; the creature no longer has the Blinded and Restrained conditions.





MALABRACHT CHANGELINGS

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CHAPTER 2 CHANGELINGS

THE ELEGANT, SEVERE MALABRACHTS DESCEND ON A lightly settled world in their ornately-wrought and decorated ships. Theirs is a message not of war but of wonder. They are sent to prepare the way for their august masters, the Bright Scions of the Aviran Dynasties. They bring gifts and they bring requests, and soon enough demands. All must be put in order. There can be no irregularity or waste, nothing unsightly. At first it seems as though they are open-handed benefactors whose staff will repair and improve any struggling system that the locals have been despairing of. Then they closet themselves with whatever leadership they can find.

The gifts of the Malabracht have costs. They require workers and materials for the buildings the Aviran Celestials are accustomed to. The people must learn certain forms of address and obedience. Early on a cadre of locals is armed and equipped and set above the others. A privileged class of enforcers whose position goes hand in hand with their mission to ensure that everything is perfect for the moment of arrival. The Malabrachts pass from being generous visitors to the iron bureaucracy of a new and rigid state awaiting only its Celestial capstone to complete it.

Ask them about their masters, those for whom all this effort is expended, and they wax rhapsodic. The Aviran, most glorious of all the Celestials! The shining jewel in the Centauri Cluster's crown, the star in their firmament, et cetera, et cetera. You get the idea. And details! Most Malabrachts will talk for hours on end,

reeling off histories, battles won, alliances formed, enemies destroyed beyond all record, and every word of it true, consistent no matter which of them you talk to. Where the exploits of the Aviran are concerned their memories are nothing short of uncanny. Which leaves only one problem, really.

Within the archives of those Crown Dominion Celestials particularly concerned with ancient history, one can indeed find reference to the Aviran. Insofar as anyone has been interested to check, the details the Malabrachts reel off are entirely accurate, to the last date and name and fine point of etiquette. Yet as far as any human scholar has been able to ascertain, the very last Bright Scion of the Aviran died in the ruins of their final stronghold at least ten thousand years ago. Whatever the circumstances of their ultimate demise, they never got around to telling their devoted servants, the Malabrachts.

ELEGANT DELEGATIONS

A Malabracht is relatively human-adjacent, as Changelings go. Well over 6 feet tall, and slender, they have large eyes and a small nose and mouth, but their expressions readily communicate themselves to the human eye. Those expressions are entirely under the conscious control of the Malabrachts, though, rather than representing any window to the soul. They can push their faces from avuncular benevolence to furious outrage in the blink of an eye, and you can't know if they actually feel either. They have long-fingered hands without nails, and a series of gill-like slits in their necks and along their forearms that serve to amplify and reinforce their voices. In place of hair, they have a mane of translucent, glass-like cilia that shimmers with a hypnotic rainbow sheen.

A Malabracht delegation is seldom alone. They collect retainers on behalf of their masters, a retinue of other Changelings—and, as time goes on, humans and Awakened. Where the local populace is neither receptive to their news nor strong enough to resist them, they can usually deploy sufficient force to take control.



PABLO MUNOZ

term for them. A broken Malabracht will find someone else to serve—a Celestial, a human, an ancient Remnant machine intelligence, something. Anything. Their entire mental well-being is designed to revolve around someone else. And they are good servants, to an extent. Certainly, once their loyalty is given it is cast iron. You'll never find a more devoted follower. Except they tend towards excess, and they are very used to performing services for Celestials who aren't around to give them fresh instructions.

A Malabracht is a very capable majordomo or administrator right up until the point when they decide your friends, acquaintances, or family can't be trusted or are simply not good enough to be around you. They are fanatical about acting in your best interests, usually without consulting you. If it was good enough for the Aviran, after all ...

Amongst Crown Dominion Celestials, Malabrachts are a source of great amusement. Many lords will very seriously receive "delegations" from the Aviran, enter into all sorts of imaginary treaties, and then point the Malabrachts at some world where their particular curse will be most entertaining. Needless to say, the various means of persuasion the Malabrachts possess have little effect on Celestials, though they are potent against other Changelings.

FATE OF THE AVIRAN DYNASTIES

So, what of the Aviran themselves? Gone, long gone, surely. Except the Cluster is vast, and experienced time is subjective. Malabracht technology and ships are usually maintained to a high standard, and decorated to an even higher one, and probably that just reflects worlds that have become subject to the dream of the Aviran. The rumor of Aviran grave worlds and ship graveyards and fabulously adorned tombs persists, though, and if anyone knows where they are it's the Malabrachts. They also sometimes turn up using hitherto unseen Remnant devices. The idea that there is some extant core to the Aviran is enormously attractive to human treasure hunters looking for wealth and technology beyond the dreams of mere salvagers. More than one crew has tried to inveigle themselves into the confidence of the Malabrachts without falling victim to their tricks. A world of gilded palaces and godlike technology might be just waiting to be rediscovered.

Of course, such an Exodus might become a lot less profitable if the Aviran Dynasties are still alive out there ...

MALABRACHT

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	11	+0	+0	DEX	15	+2	+4	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	11	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	18	+4	+6

Skills Deception +6, Persuasion +6

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages All

CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Mental Construct. If the Malabracht talks with a creature, the Malabracht can prepare trigger words on that creature and these triggers can be used at any time, by any Malabracht. The creature doesn't initially realize they have been compromised with a trigger word as the Malabracht blends it into standard conversation.

It takes 1 action for the Malabracht to prepare
 Trigger Word: Pain

It takes 1 minute for the Malabracht to prepare
 Trigger Word: Halt

It takes 10 minutes for the Malabracht to prepare
 Trigger Word: Death

If a creature knows it has been compromised with a trigger word, it can use an action to make a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check. On success, the most recently acquired trigger word is removed.

ACTIONS

Slap. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) Bludgeoning damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 12 (3d6 + 2) Piercing damage.

Trigger Word: Death. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature within 60 feet of it that has trigger words prepared on it. *Failure:* The target is reduced to 0 Hit Points.

Trigger Word: Halt. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 14, one creature within 60 feet of it that has trigger words prepared on it. *Failure:* The target has the Paralyzed condition for 1 minute. *Success:* The target's Speed becomes 0 until the end of its next turn.

BONUS ACTIONS

Trigger Word: Pain. The Malabracht speaks a trigger word at a creature within 60 feet of it. If the creature has trigger words prepared on it, it takes 26 (4d12) Sonic damage.



MONYET CHANGELINGS

MONYET CHANGELINGS

Caretakers of the Dead

PAULO MUNOZ

>>> THE MORE OF THIS BIG AND BRIL-
 liant universe one traverses, the more difficult it can be to find a common thread among the strange cultures and creatures one encounters. It becomes easy to regard the Celestials, Changelings, and even other humans that share this grand expanse of space with us as too different—too alien—to relate to. But there remains—as of now, anyway—one thing that ties together all the disparate children of the stars. Whether genetics and the gifts of science give ten or ten-thousand years, each of us meets our end eventually, to age or accident or to any of the other countless causes. Death is the single sure assurance of the universe.

Approaches to death and funeral customs differ greatly. Even within the same group or species the rituals and regards given to the deceased can vary. Some take great pains to construct elaborate monuments and mausoleums, others dispose of their dead with the same tact given latrine refuse. But there is one people that have made funerals the gravity well around which their entire culture orbits.

It is thought that the Monyet were created by the ancient Keledai Celestials, to aid in their fabled—but utterly mysterious—ascension ceremony. The Monyet ships stationed around Talaydin, the Keledai homeworld, are considered sacred and are amongst the most heavily guarded objects in Keledai space. Only Monyet are allowed to interact with, or even see, dead or ascended Keledai, and the Monyet ships around Talaydin are forbidden from providing services to anyone but the Keledai.

Unlike the reclusive culture that created them, however, the Monyet themselves are well known and well-traveled. Since their creation they have expanded far beyond their original territory, and now have representatives stationed across the entirety of the Cluster. Somewhat surprisingly, they have enjoyed a mostly positive reception wherever they go, earning fame for their elaborate and compassionate funeral services and for their unwavering neutrality. Monyet are non-political, non-religious, and adamant pacifists who take immense pride in their neutrality.

The Monyet are humanoid in appearance, with slightly elongated heads. The most interesting feature of the Monyet is their hands and arms, which have adapted to handle corpses. Each arm is controlled separately in the brain, allowing the individual to perform completely different tasks with each limb simultaneously without confusion. In keeping with their reputation for neutrality, observers often note that the Monyet take great care to keep even their faces and mannerisms free of any indication of interest or strong emotion.

RESPECT THE DEAD

The Monyet have no concern for the affairs of the living, their work revolves only around the rites of the dead. Monyet funerary services aren't elaborate, but they are exceptional. Among no other people will you find greater regard for those who have passed from this plane, or more tender respect for the bodies they leave behind. The Monyet also put meticulous effort into learning about the funeral customs of the people that they offer their services to and incorporate them as well as they can into their own rituals.

Though they are always willing to patiently answer any questions a prospective client may have about their services, the Monyet are unwaveringly reticent about the people who created them. It is known that to be stationed on one of the Talaydin ships and serve the Keledai is considered the highest honor an individual Monyet receives. We know also that the Keledai ascension ceremony is incredibly complex and specialized, explaining why the Monyet were created in the first place. But what specific rituals or customs the Keledai require, the Monyet refuse to say.

FUNERAL SHIPS

Monyet ships can be found orbiting planets or slowly sailing across well-traveled stretches of space. Their sepulcher ships are easily recognizable for their immense beauty and elegance. Every ship is tailored to suit its captain, with an ambiance of tranquility being the foremost priority for each unique design. The Monyet offer their services without discrimination to all they encounter but take no offense if they are refused in favor of a culture's traditional practices. Still, Monyet funerals have become ubiquitous throughout the Cluster and are the first choice for many Celestials, humans, and other sapient species alike. For all that divides us, in this one thing, the inescapable fate called death, we still find a spark of unity.



MONYET

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 12 Initiative +2 (12)
 HP 18 (4d8)
 Speed 30 ft.

	MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE		
STR	10	+0	+0	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	11	+0	+0
INT	19	+4	+6	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	15	+2	+2

Skills History +6, Insight +4, Medicine +6, Persuasion +4
Resistances Cold, Sonic
Immunities Frightened
Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 12
Languages Keledai, Monyet, Standard
CR 1/4 (XP 50; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Fists of Disdain. Melee Attack Roll: +2, reach 5 ft. Hit: 7 (2d6) Bludgeoning damage.

Chill Caster. Ranged Attack Roll: +4, range 10/30 ft. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) Cold damage. If this attack does 8 or more damage, the target has the Stunned condition until the end of their next turn.

BONUS ACTIONS

Step of Serene Avoidance. The Monyet takes the Dodge action and adds 2 to its AC until the start of its next turn.



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OVAR CHANGELINGS

The Carriers

PABLO MUÑOZ

>>> NOT EVERY CHANGELING IS HUMAN-SIZED OR even humanoid. Each was designed and purpose-built for a particular task: fighting, fixing, playing music, or even polishing your fancy Celestial shoes. And there are, of course, jobs that a human frame, or even a human scale, is less than optimal for. Sometimes literally impossible for. For those, the Celestial bioengineers made something special.

Some Changelings are from recognizable stock. You can see elements of old Earth fauna there, suggesting the original ancestor was some Celestial analogue to an Awakened species before all the tinkering and forced evolution. Or else, with some, the Celestial artist-scientists plainly started with something closer to home. There's plenty of human DNA in a lot of Changeling species, because when it comes to building the tools to mediate between them and the universe most Celestials never exactly had moral qualms about how they went about it. A tool is a tool, and that includes a string of genetic markers that came from some close cousin. And there's definitely some human in the mix with the Ovar but it's not exactly on display. What the rest was, originally, is a mystery. There's a lot of bug in the way they look, but the chief characteristic of bugs is that they are small enough to stand on, or at least kick out of the way. Whatever insect-like species donated a chunk of its genetic code to allow the Ovar exterior had a lot of mutation and engineering under its belt already, or else the creators pirated something genuinely alien.

GIANT FLYING BEETLES

An Ovar looks mostly like a big beetle. Big, here, meaning at least 16 feet long when full grown, and potentially twice or three times larger than that. Six locomotive legs, armored and articulated. A small head with a variety of mandibles and extra limbs, plus whatever kit and gear they've fit it with. Their hard-shelled bodies are round and bloated-looking, and partly that's the incredible load of musculature they pack into their thorax section, and partly it's because their abdomens are hollow. That's where their crew go. Ovar are dedicated personnel carrier Changelings, and "dedicated" is the word. Six legs with deployable claws mean they can get you over any terrain you encounter and climb sheer walls if they must. They're even buoyant enough to swim and can operate sealed and underwater using internal air sacs. The things will get you anywhere.

Oh, and some of them fly. You'd not believe it, honestly, but the stuff their shells and internal skeletons is made of is basically like hollow carbon fiber, super-strong and super-light. Their metabolisms run absurdly hot and efficient, and they basically eat sugar

and rocket fuel. They can get off the ground with the thunder of an old helicopter and deliver a dozen humans and their kit to where they need to go, shrugging off and returning fire if need be. The only thing they can't really do is power up into orbit but no worry, the Celestials use cradles to take them in and out of atmosphere and they can clam up against hard vacuum and keep their crew safe for the time it takes to get into a ship or station dock.

PASSENGER CAVITY

You want to know what it's like inside them, obviously. "Distressingly organic" is probably the best visual reference. Everything in an Ovar is made from the Ovar, including the seats and the facilities. Their internal structural skeleton provides a lot of handholds and support, but also leaves you in no doubt you are inside a living thing. Oh, and there are pipes for water and gruel for long flights, but that requires a certain amount of fortitude many Travelers don't have. Plus, there's the face. Ovars have a face inside their bodies so they can talk to their crew. It's usually quite a human face except it's set in a wall and made of articulated chitin segments. The fact that the average Ovar is solicitous and chatty doesn't make the whole business any less creepy to the first time Traveler.

The root of Ovar psychology is loyalty. Some say there's dog DNA buried in there, although an Awakened dog might take you up for stereotyping. A behavioral scientist would say that they imprint rapidly on their crew and develop a deep loyalty to whoever's given into their care. Another way of looking at it is that they are mother hens looking for a new clutch to brood over. Their attachment can feel a bit stiflingly maternal, which is a worrying thing in a beetle the size of a heavy cargo shuttle.

Ovar aren't the brightest of Changelings and are bred to follow instructions rather than take the initiative. They have a solid sense of their own capabilities, though, and a good crew will bring their carrier into any tactical discussions. Used properly, they are far more than just a conveyance.

CUSTOMIZABLE VEHICLES

The Celestials made them to be modular. Given a little prep time most Ovar can grow specialized limbs and organs for particular tasks. They can grow fine manipulators for their mandibles, plough, saw, and other exoskeletal modifications for their locomotive limbs, even create translucent patches of abdomen wall for windows. They also have chemogenerative glands that produce a variety of offensive or defensive compounds



to deal with close-quarter threats. Add to this the variety of artificial tech they can produce emplacements for, and a good Ovar is a real beast of all burdens. It's common to find them fitted with a variety of sensors, comms packages, heavy weapons, or munitions.

Ovar are deployed across the Crown Dominions and beyond for a variety of tasks. They were almost certainly made for military use in the first place, and you still find them shuttling Imperial Knights into war zones, making contested landings or providing emergency evacuation from a fight turned sour. Their dogged loyalty means they do their utmost to come through for their crew. As an additional bonus, their brains are fitted with neural bypasses that limit their adrenaline exposure. Under stress, Ovar tend to become calmer and more focused rather than panicking. Because nobody wants something that big charging about in a rage with only a hazy idea of what's going on.

Civilian Ovar are also common, often ex-military who've been pensioned off for agricultural, haulage, or transport use. They retain their abiding loyalty to anyone who has ever been in their "crew", and one of the few situations where they become genuinely anxious and difficult is where a past and present crew (or different factions in the current crew) are in conflict.

REPRODUCTION

The Ovar reproductive cycle represents an interesting opportunity for anyone hoping to acquire one. The Ovar that you see are all females. The males are about 3 feet long and latch onto a female, merging with her, losing their brain and becoming little more than a parasite. This "mating", such as it is, triggers the final adult phase of the Ovar, setting up the maternal instincts that underly her relationship with her crew. It also means that, infrequently, an Ovar will develop a new clutch of eggs. A gravid Ovar's loyalty shifts. Between laying and hatching, her care is solely to her brood. She goes somewhere secluded and can react violently even to past crews if they threaten her young. On hatching, though—a clutch of three to five in most cases—the Ovar feel a need to tender her loyalty to a new crew. Humans who end up with Ovar usually acquire them in this way. Bizarrely, for a creature so attached to its crew, the Ovar seldom raise their own young. They lack any innate behavioral pathways for it, and their creators envisaged their hatchlings simply being given over to other specialists who would train and teach them over the ten or so years of their (still relatively rapid) growth and development. A mother Ovar with a clutch about to hatch will give them over to whichever available party seems to offer the best care for them. Which is something of a specialized definition of "care" given that being treated as a living armored troop transport is just a regular life for them. Bargains over care of her young can also include a pledge for the mother to accept a particular new crew, and this can sway her into signing on with newcomers and abandoning her former employers.

HUMAN CREWS

A fair number of humans have come into possession of—or perhaps entered into partnership with—an Ovar over the decades. As they live for centuries, there are some that have served multiple generations of a human family or faction. They are seldom to be found as just brute haulers in human hands, given their relative scarcity. Military shock-assault transports and limousines for the powerful are their most common employment. Despite their obvious advantages, however, not everyone wants a vehicle with its own opinions, especially one that can be decidedly over-protective of its occupants. A crew that ignores its Ovar's advice or takes unnecessary risks can end up in a war of passive aggression with an increasingly sulky Changeling. On the other hand, more than one mercenary force or band of explorers has been hauled out of mortal peril in the face of monstrous wildlife or determined enemy fire because their transport was worried about them.

On some worlds there are wild Ovar—wild meaning that their crew went somewhere they couldn't follow, and never came back. Although they are resilient and long-lived, they seldom reach any sizable population. Their young often fail to reach maturity owing to a lack of parental care, which causes the creatures considerable distress, and they simply don't interact with each other.

There is no Ovar society. They were bred solely to relate to a crew of non-Ovar. Protracted solitude is very bad for them, and they often react to any visitors with utter desperation to be of service. While that kind of reception might seem like an unmissable free gift to a human explorer, this can go badly wrong if the Ovar decides that the best way to keep their new "owner" safe is to stop them ever leaving the planet. Or ever leaving the Ovar's own body.

OVAR CARRIER

HUGE CHANGELING

AC 14 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 126 (12d12 + 48)
Speed 20 ft., Climb 20 ft., Fly 30 ft. (Hover), Swim 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	27	+8	+11	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	18	+4	+7
INT	9	-1	-1	WIS	8	-1	-1	CHA	9	-1	-1

Skills Athletics +14

Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing

Senses Passive Perception 9

Languages Ovar, Standard, plus one other language

CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

TRAITS

Hollow Body. The Ovar can carry up to 14 Medium-sized creatures inside its body. While inside, creatures have Total Cover and a sealed internal atmosphere.

Vacuum-Sealed. The Ovar and any creatures it is carrying can survive in a vacuum for up to 1 hour before suffering any detrimental effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Ovar makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +11, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 13 (1d10 + 8) Slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +11, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 21 (2d12 + 8) Piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Mobilize. The Ovar opens or closes its internal access points. While open, creatures can enter and exit the Ovar, but they lose their cover and sealed atmosphere.

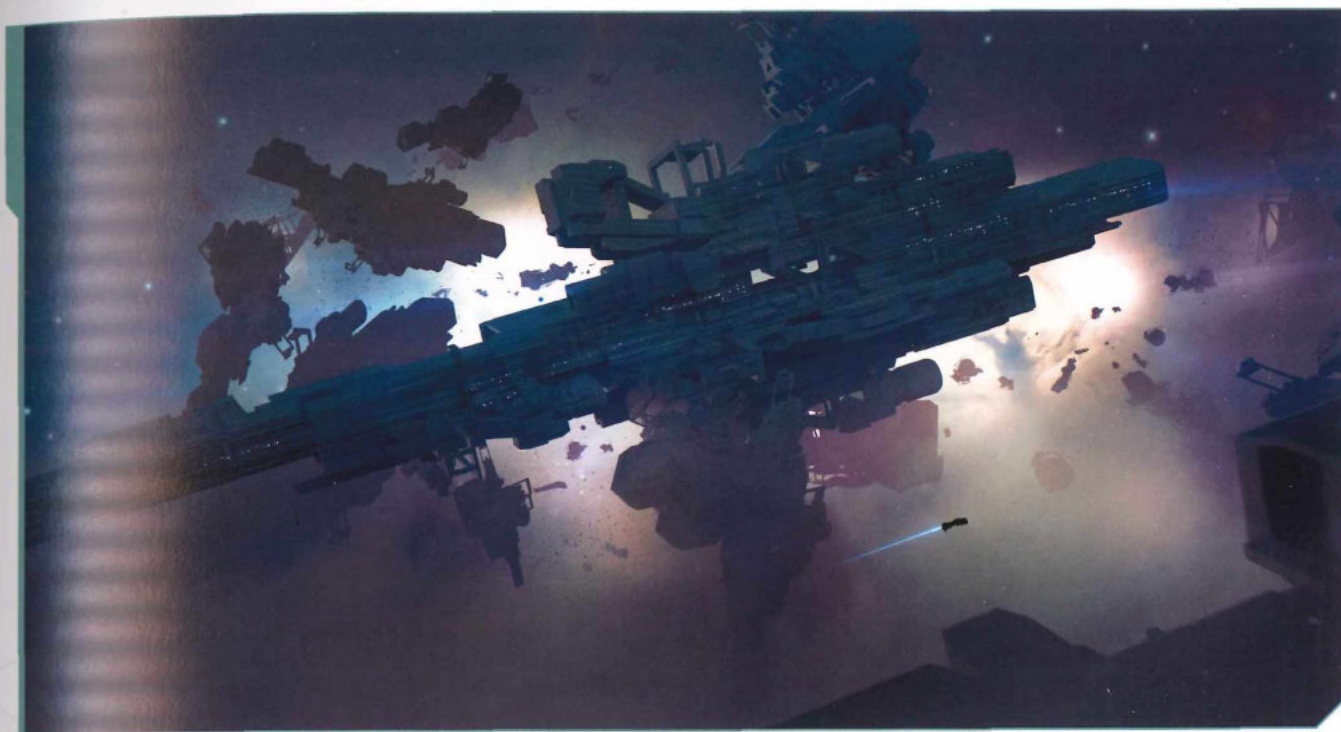


REXXANA CHANGELINGS

REXXANA CHANGELINGS

The Workers

PABLO MUNOZ



»»»» **FOR ANYONE WHO HAS SEEN THE** architecture of a thriving Celestial culture—the mighty ships and intricate cities—or who has encountered the still impressive ruins of a long-extinct one—crumpling strongholds full of Remnant treasure—it should come as little surprise that the Celestials who engineered these marvels did not build any of them with their own hands.

While humans still know the value of manual labor, of putting our own sweat and toil into the foundations of our greatest works, Celestials have long favored a more impersonal approach. Over the centuries, they have created a wide variety of Changeling servants to perform the tasks they regard as too lowly to do themselves. Lucky Changeling species are integrated into permanent roles in the Celestial society that created them, more often they are abandoned once whatever project they were designed for is complete. Now, various Changelings are found on worlds throughout the Centauri Cluster, equipped with only whatever intellect their makers saw fit to provide and whatever tools were abandoned with them.

The REXXANA are one of the most common Changeling species in the Cluster and have been around since the dawn of Celestial

ascendancy. They are humanoid in appearance, standing between 6 and 7 feet tall with arms that are slightly longer than their legs. Originally designed as a construction workforce, they bear an early attempt at a neural induction interface known as a Trigger Socket. This sphincter-like orifice on the palm side of a REXXANA's wrists can be equipped with a metal plug with a basic on and off function. This device allows the REXXANA to use tools like drills or welders as extensions of their bodies. Like most Changeling species, the REXXANA were only given the intelligence necessary to perform the work they were designed for. They can follow straightforward instructions and operate tools once taught how. But they rarely understand the principles behind how things operate or learn more complex skills like reading or writing.

REPRODUCTION

Male and female REXXANA differ dramatically in both intellectual capacity and physical appearance. Both sexes undergo two stages of puberty. The first stage is terrestrial human normal, the second, which occurs three years later, produces a far greater level of physical change. For males, muscle strength increases, excess fat is shed, and skin hardens to leather-like toughness. Their fingers grow in length, reflexes and balance improve, and they become sterile. For female REXXANA, the secondary puberty stage triggers a massive growth spurt which lasts for up to five years. By the end of the growing stage, a female can be over 12 feet tall and weigh up to fifteen hundred pounds. Females have two wombs, which gestate simultaneously, and pregnancies often result in quintuplets or sextuplets. Offspring are mostly male; a mother gives birth to only three or four females in her life. Female REXXANA who have undergone the second puberty stage select a retinue of males to serve as mates and to assist with child-rearing. These "Lords" are chosen before they undergo

the secondary puberty stage and ingest a hormone provided by the female to block the secondary stage and ensure they remain fertile. A female typically has around ten Lords. Unlike their male counterparts, female REXXANA are capable of more complex problem solving and display more intelligence overall. A REXXANA clan generally consists of dozens of males led by a few females, who direct everything from resource management to war.

FORGOTTEN SERVANTS

With advances in Celestial technology, the REXXANA have gradually become obsolete, falling to the rise of automation and mass-produced constructs. Some Dominions have found a use for the REXXANA as expendable first-wave soldiers, outfitting their Trigger Sockets with guns instead of construction tools. But mostly the Celestials have discarded their Changeling workers, abandoning them on dozens of barely habitable worlds to fend for themselves. Some REXXANA

have adapted and evolved, growing in intelligence and turning rudimentary clans into burgeoning societies. Others have not fared so well, falling prey to inbreeding and infighting. A REXXANA settlement on one world might be a refined urban culture, complete with industry, agriculture, and trade. A settlement on a neighboring world might be nothing more than an underground warren, with highly territorial and nearly feral REXXANA attacking anything that comes near.

While REXXANA aren't the most dangerous Changeling species in the Cluster, your chances of survival are certainly better if the settlement you encounter is a civilized one. Don't let down your guard, however. The more intelligent REXXANA have taken care to maintain the weaponry and tools given to them by their Celestial creators. Their Trigger Socket interfaces allow them to use these devices with far greater speed and agility than any ordinary human. Even the less advanced REXXANA clans have learned to make primitive melee weapons that they can wield with deadly precision. One shouldn't forget the durability and fierceness needed to survive on Remnant worlds and any species that has accomplished this feat is one to be wary of. Too many Travelers discount the REXXANA as a threat because of their origin as a guileless construction workforce. Given their numbers and territorial tendencies, this is a mistake. Don't repeat it.

REXXANA FEMALE

LARGE CHANGELING

AC 11 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 76 (8d10 + 32)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	22	+6	+8	DEX	12	+1	+1	CON	18	+4	+6
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	14	+2	+2

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5, Persuasion +4
Senses Passive Perception 15
Languages REXXANA plus one other language
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The REXXANA makes three Blade attacks and one Pistol attack.

Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) Slashing damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +3, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 11 (3d6 + 1) Piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Aggressive Sprint. The REXXANA moves up to its Speed towards a hostile creature that it can see.

REACTIONS

Living Cover. *Trigger:* The REXXANA takes damage from a ranged attack and a **REXXANA Male** is within 5 feet of her. *Response:* The other REXXANA takes the damage instead.

REXXANA MALE

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 11 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3	+5	DEX	12	+1	+1	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	8	-1	-1	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +4
Senses Passive Perception 14
Languages REXXANA plus one other language
CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The REXXANA makes two Blade attacks.

Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) Slashing damage.

Bolt Gun. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +3, range 30/60 ft. *Hit:* 11 (4d4 + 1) Piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Aggressive Sprint. The REXXANA moves up to its Speed towards a hostile creature that it can see.



PABLO MUÑOZ

The Risitch are a humanoid Changeling species, standing over 9 feet tall and bulky with the fat and fur that protects them from the harsh elements. At first glance, the Risitch might resemble polar bears, with soft, fluffy pelts of white, gray, and celadon. Don't be fooled by the rounded shape and thick fur, however. Risitch are about as cuddly as the world they were designed to survive and twice as unyielding. Both the hands and feet of a Risitch have long, deadly, retractable talons, with the tensile strength to rival steel, and their jaws are full of short, sharp, saber teeth. Perhaps the most interesting adaptive feature of the Risitch is their noses, which extend halfway round their heads and use blood to warm the air they breathe.

While the Risitch are very intelligent with a highly advanced technological society that has outlasted even the Celestial culture that originally designed them, they hold several traditions that outsiders might find downright archaic. Of most immediate importance to the venturesome Traveler is the lack of any form of legal court system. Disputes are settled with blade and blood in formalized arena duels. Risitch culture is heavily ritualized and defined by ideals of honor, dignity, and fairness. Those shiny ideals won't save you in the dueling arena, however. Risitch fight with awe-inspiring ferocity and speed. Although they utilize sophisticated modern weapons in their day to day lives, duels are fought with traditional swords, daggers, and talons. A clever combatant hoping to win a formal duel with an illegal weapon had better be sure their draw is quicker than whatever crooked business deal they tried to pull over the Risitch, lest they face a messy demise at the end of those steely retractable claws.

RITE OF PASSAGE

At least one of the submarines in any voyage is likely to carry a candidate hoping to join Risitch society as an adult. The individual, armed with only a breathing apparatus and an explosive-tipped spear, is released into the foreboding open ocean with a simple quest: bring back the tooth of a slain dreki. Terrifying in size and ferocity, the massive, worm-like dreki are the apex predators of Glacies' unforgiving oceans. A candidate enters a fresh dreki hatching tunnel—already a risky endeavor, as ice tunnels are notorious for collapsing and entombing occupants—and attempts to kill an adult dreki. There's no light in Glacies' oceans, and dreki are entirely blind, having no eyes at all. Risitch candidates therefore have a visual advantage over their prey and carry powerful flashlights and motion sensing equipment. Numerous things can still go disastrously wrong, however.

Tunnels are quite narrow relative to the size of an adult dreki. If a candidate has the misfortune to encounter the creature from behind, death is all but certain. Dreki are nearly impossible to kill from the back and their thrashing is likely to crush the candidate or collapse the tunnel walls. An equally unhappy fate awaits candidates who come across egg chambers full of hungry dreki hatchlings, ready to rip to shreds anything that moves in a



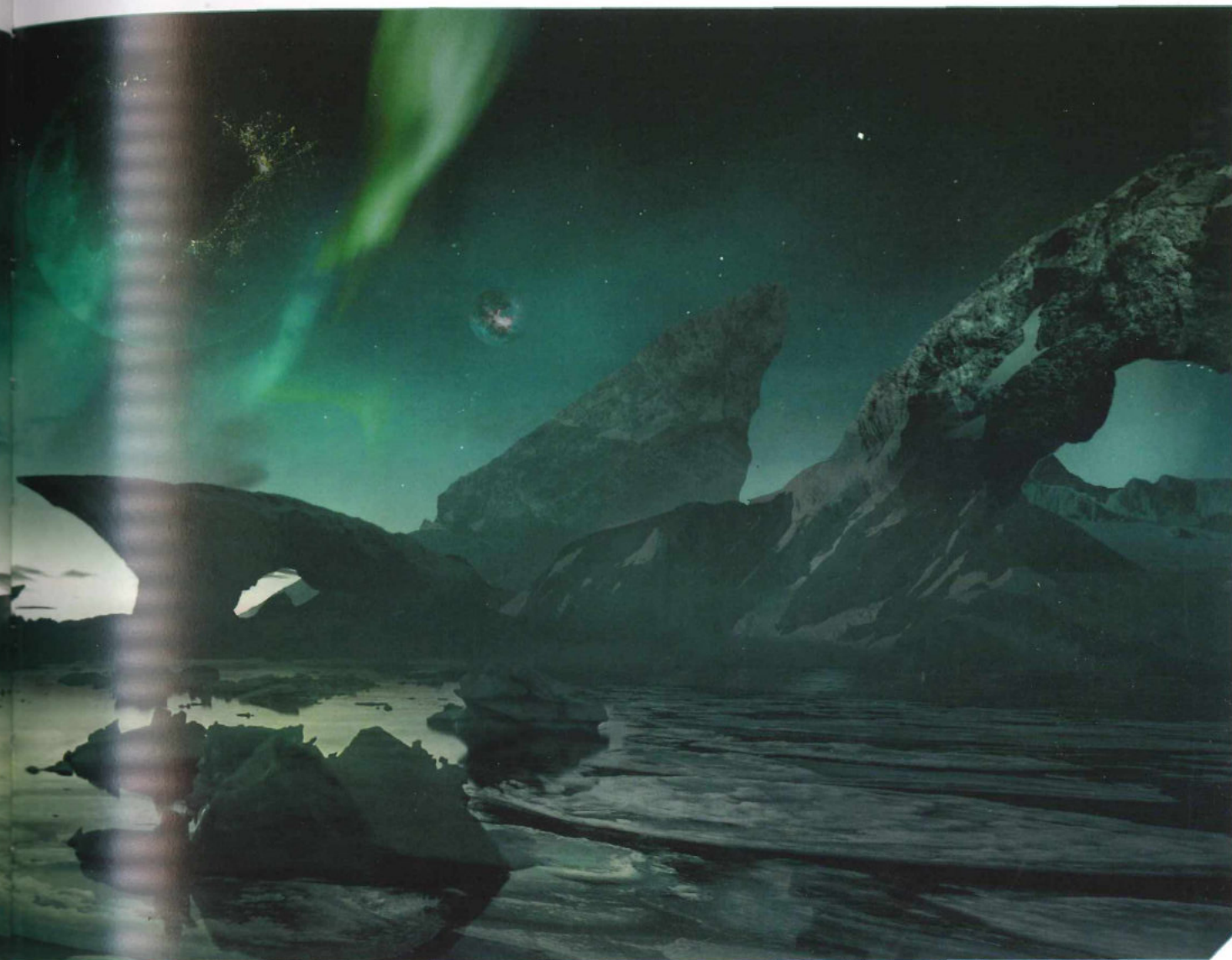
matter of seconds. Ideally, a Risitch candidate encounters a young adult headed from the egg chamber to the open ocean. The dreki brain is located in the front and a well-timed strike from the candidate's explosive-tipped spear kills it in a single blow. The candidate then harvests the creature's teeth as proof of the kill. An adult female is the most prestigious prize, as their teeth are the largest.

Candidates have ten days to complete their quests. Returning to the submarine without a tooth is worse than not returning at all. Such an unfortunate is barred from boarding the vessel and left behind to drown in the dark. To the outsider, facing the tunnel will no doubt seem a cruel and outdated ritual, but the Risitch won't hear of doing away with it. Life on Glacies is hard. Facing the tunnel determines if a Risitch is truly prepared to take on the dangers of this environment and if they are worthy of the societal resources needed to survive it.

RELUCTANT WANDERERS

Risitch are a nomadic people. The allomoose herds they rely on as a primary food source have set migration seasons, moving every few years in search of fresh fields of iceweed and the Risitch move with them. Risitch cities are made up of mobile, lenticular buildings and the sight of whole city blocks creeping slowly over the frozen tundra isn't something one soon forgets.

While the Risitch have both the means and knowledge for space travel, it is extremely unusual for them to journey far. The cooling suits they must wear to survive environments with what any other species would consider reasonable temperatures are massive, heavy, and expensive to upkeep. It is also rare for Risitch to travel alone. Community ties are highly valued and a lone Risitch is almost assuredly an exile that has been rejected for some heinous crime.



As a whole, Risitch prefer to stay within sight of Glacies, usually going only as far as one of the three small manufacturing moons that orbit their home. The valuable natural resources harvested from Glacies' oceans are processed on these moons into the pharmacological products that draw merchant vessels from across the Centauri Cluster. If you are hardy enough to brave Glacies' unwelcoming surface, or the freezing life-support systems of the manufacturing plants, you are likely to brush shoulders with Celestials and powerful Traveler Dynasties alike, all hoping to secure a trading deal with the Risitch.





RISITCH

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 12 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 25 ft.

	MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE		
STR	14	+2	+4	DEX	13	+1	+1	CON	15	+2	+4
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	12	+1	+1

Skills Athletics +4
Vulnerabilities Heat
Immunities Cold
Senses Passive Perception 12
Languages Risitch, Standard
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Chionophile. The Risitch is comfortable in and suffers no detriments from extremely frigid temperatures.

Thermal Padding. The Risitch has Disadvantage on all D20 Tests when the ambient temperature is 50F or hotter.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) Piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) Slashing damage.



RISITCH BERSERKER

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 13

Initiative +1 (11)

HP 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 25 ft.

	MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE		
STR	20	+5	+7	DEX	12	+1	+1	CON	16	+3	+5
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	11	+0	+0

Skills Athletics +7

Vulnerabilities Heat

Immunities Cold

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Keledai, Risitch

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Chionophile. The Risitch is comfortable in and suffers no detriments from extremely frigid temperatures.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the Risitch can gain Advantage on all melee attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have Advantage until the start of its next turn.

Thermal Padding. The Risitch has Disadvantage on all D20 Tests when the ambient temperature is 50F or hotter.

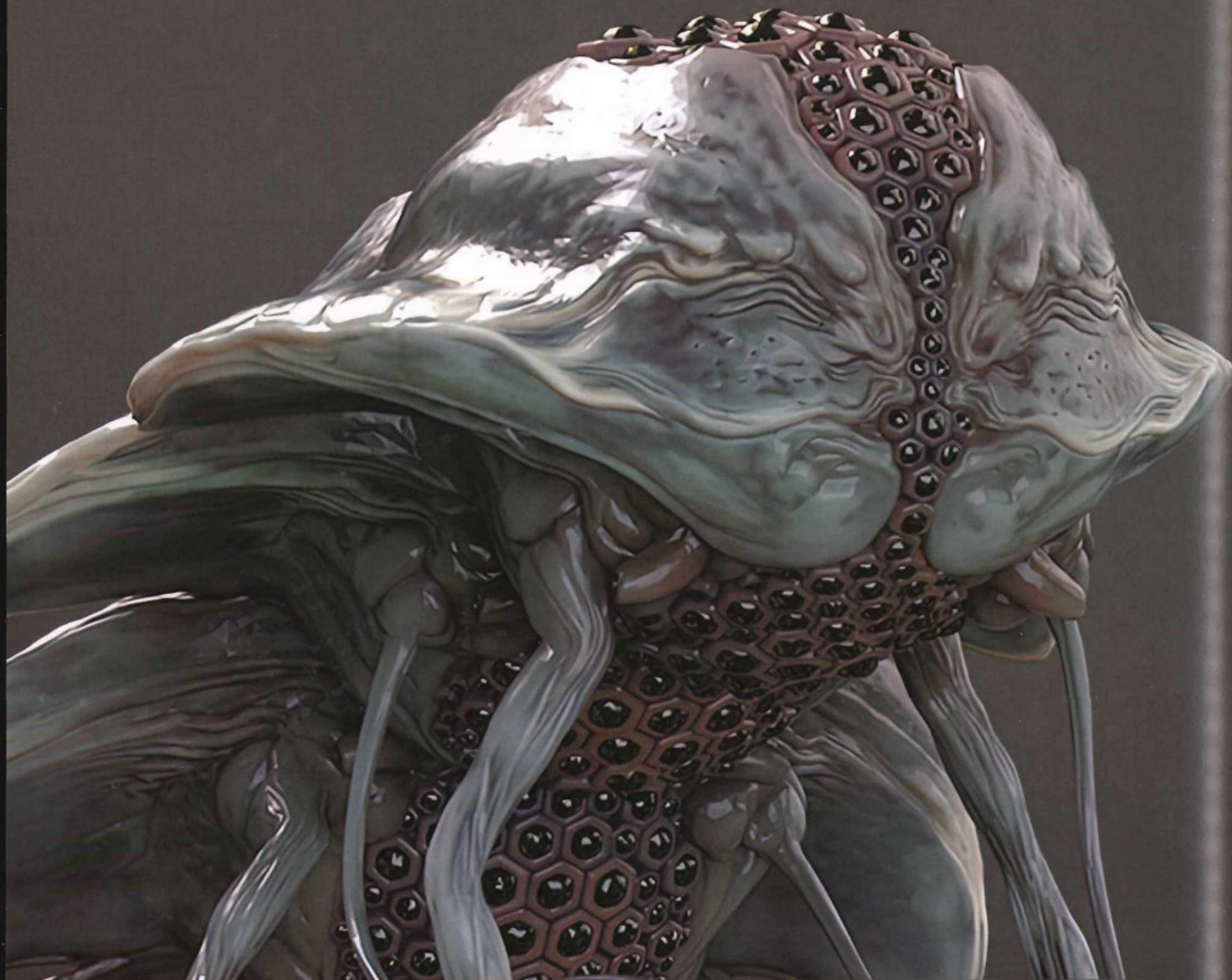
ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) Piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) Slashing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Exert (Recharge 6). The Risitch makes a Claw attack.



VAEL CHANGELINGS

VAEL CHANGELINGS

The Voidfarers

THE CREATION—ENGINEERING, BREEDING, HOWEVER YOU PREFER TO

think of it—of Changelings is perhaps the ultimate expression of the Celestials' attitude towards the universe and their place in it. That, whatever the task, they have gone beyond designing a tool to aid them in accomplishing it, and instead have a whole self-aware species to do it for them. No matter how arduous or dangerous the task. In fact, the worse the task the more likely they are to delegate to something twisted utterly away from any kind of ancestral stock, and yet still intelligent enough to understand the narrow and unpleasant life it was remade for.

The Vael might be the most extreme of these. They are the Changelings shipped in when there is work to be done in space, in hard vacuum. They were made to live where nothing lives, in the absence of anything life normally requires. The Vael are some of the most numerous Changelings, but most humans won't ever meet one. If you ever see a Celestial shipyard or asteroid mining facility, though, they'll likely be there. They live in pockets on the outside of orbital stations so they can perform maintenance tasks. They are held dormant in Celestial warships to sally out onto the hull and conduct repairs mid-battle, or to serve as saboteurs to transfer onto the exterior of any opposing ship being boarded. They subsist in distant, lightless, mines and refineries.

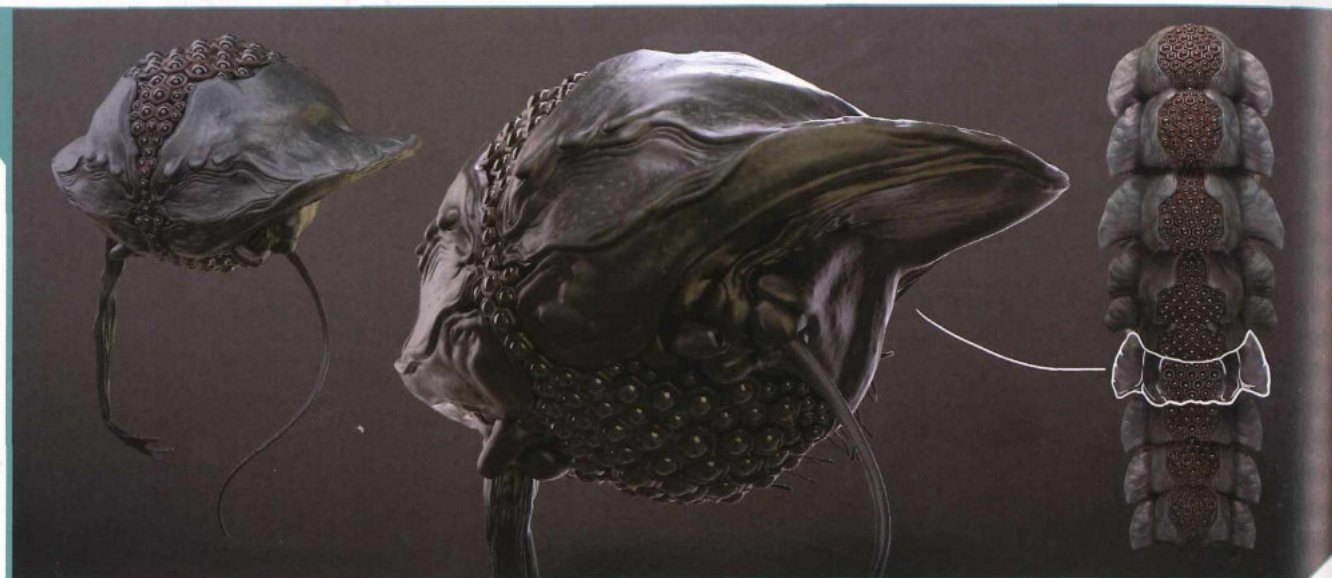
BIZARRE APPEARANCE

They have an arthropod look to them, built in segments and with a hard outer shell. Each rounded section sports two pairs of limbs, one thin whisker used for the sense of touch they rely heavily on, the other being arms ending in disturbingly human hands. Honeycombed nodules on the back and underside of each segment are compound eyes constructed of myriad stone tubes because vertebrate eyes couldn't survive the lack of pressure. An individual Vael might be only three feet long with just a couple of segments, or they might be far, far bigger. Ten, twelve, twenty segments are all quite possible, leading to a human-handed centipede-looking monster of thirty feet or more.



The thin Vael limbs have no fluid spaces within them but are hollow and controlled by a series of tendons via muscles hidden within their body segments. The limb tissue isn't "alive", and is cut off from the biological processes of the whole as soon as it is grown. Hence loss of limbs doesn't lead to an explosive loss of bodily substance into the void, and the Vael can regrow them over time. Their whole bioengineered design is centered about the need to isolate themselves entirely from their environment. The only point of contact is to take in food at one end and excrete very minimal waste at the other, and both apertures use multiple sphincters in an airlock system.

Their biochemistry is powered by an efficient anaerobic respiration system whose waste products are repurposed with minimal energy loss. They have no need to breathe although they pause often during heavy activity to allow their internal biochemistry to catch up. Vael senses are similarly specialized. Their rows of “eyes” give them a view of the entire three-dimensional area around them, linking to a distributed brain that is extremely good at mapping volumes of space and calculating the movement of objects, but they aren’t good at focusing on fine detail. Their sense of touch is incredibly acute, both via their hands and the long whiskers that jut from each segment. With these, they not only sense their immediate environment but also communicate between themselves. Vael who have to interact with other species often have one pair of whiskers replaced by an artificial translator that converts their tactile language into Celestial—or even human—signals.



UNIQUELY SKILLED

Vael typically move by clambering about on the outside of a ship, rock, or station. Their fingers are tipped with complex, corrugated structures that help them climb to most surfaces and they instinctively hold on with at least one hand at any moment so that they don't bounce themselves off into the void. Alongside their visual organs they also have a pair of mobile nozzles on each section connected to sacs of material that can be flash-catalyzed into gas, that they use to move reactively through space in brief bursts.

As with many technical-task Changelings, Vael are smart. Through most of their lives they have little contact with any other than their own kind, and so they are required to display initiative in their work. No Changeling dockmaster wants to have to micromanage the exterior maintenance staff, after all. They are highly dexterous, and the same mental faculty that allows them to process complex 3-D environments also lets them construct mental plans of machines and devices, mentally working through the stages of a repair or construction before starting the physical job. They are surrounded by the ultimate in scarcity, after all. They can seldom afford to waste anything by making mistakes. Humans who have communicated with them report that they are even more task-focused than most Changelings. If there is a job that needs doing or a resource that they need then their conversation focuses obsessively on it. Where they are outside Celestial oversight and have no set tasks to undertake, they are still almost always working towards something.

Like many Changelings, it's hard to say what a group of Vael will do if they are suddenly without instructions. Some may simply grow their numbers, creating larger communities in the manner of life everywhere. Others may use their technical knowledge to work towards some grand project of their own. Sometimes they create art, incising vast abstract designs across the surface of asteroids and derelict ships. The few humans who've had a lot to do with them report that Vael, left to their own devices, definitely have distinct personalities, relationships, and goals.

DEFICIENCIES AND SHORTCOMINGS

There are several hard limitations on what a Vael is and what it can do. The chief of these are in the realms of physics. They are heavily engineered to live in zero-gee. The interior of a Vael is still pressurized, though typically less so than a human. With preparation, they can generate gas internally to equalize inner with outer pressure, and so survive the crushing fist of a human ship's internal atmosphere. But if exposed unexpectedly to atmospheric pressure the impact can be fatal. Gravity is worse. A single gee of it renders a Vael unable to do more than writhe and drag themselves along, and the settling of internal organs usually kills them in a few minutes.

Vael can go dormant for extended periods of time, however, in which state their internal structure crystallizes at the cellular level. A dormant Vael can be exposed to a variety of conditions—heat, pressure, gravity, and the like—without harm, allowing Celestials to transport them with ease. The ability also represents the Vael's final resort if they run out of resources. They can remain dormant for centuries, using practically no energy until they contact something or receive a signal to wake.

Another limitation is diet. The exterior of a Vael exoskeleton is photo-receptive and energy-receptive. If there is a star close

enough, or an artificial generator, they can fuel the daily operations of their bodies just with raw energy, like a hummingbird subsisting entirely off nectar.

To grow and develop, however, they need raw material. They digest and metabolize just about any hydrocarbons, a combination of elements common across the Cluster. Where they serve Celestial installations and starships, the food supply is usually part of the hold their masters have over them. Where they are consigned to asteroid mines they can be found grazing on frozen methane and other deposits. A Vael with a ready supply of hydrocarbon food grows by building new segments. Large Vael in a resource-rich environment can trigger a severing between two sections, splitting off part of themselves. They grow a new tail, and the separated piece

grows a new head and that is the only way new Vael come into being. The new-budded Vael has some of the original's brain and begins life recalling the more recent life experiences of its parent.

SUBTLE REBELLIONS

It's hard to know what the Vael actually think of anything. They always seem compliant when working directly for Celestials, but they are extremely aware of their precarious lot in life. Nobody has ever seen anything like a Vael mutiny or uprising in the presence of their masters. Where they are left to their own devices, though, they show considerably more initiative. Vael mining installations still notionally serving Celestial interests have been known to interact and come to arrangements with human visitors, including not informing their masters of who has come calling.

There are also Vael groups that have entirely escaped Celestial oversight. Sometimes a mining colony finds rich hydrocarbon deposits and produces more individuals than the work needs, allowing them to bud off a new community unknown to their overlords. Other Vael have just been abandoned after their employers moved on or forgot about them or were destroyed in ancient wars. Free Vael construct their own labyrinthine homes in asteroids or find and repurpose abandoned orbitals or installations. Some hitch rides on the outside of ships, looking to start new colonies elsewhere in the Cluster.

The Vael have also seen military use, and this continues to be a problem. At some point in Celestial history there was a fashion for deploying the creatures as, in essence, living minefields in space. Vast numbers of dormant Vael were scattered near resource-rich areas, at the mouths of Gates, or in orbit around worlds. Ships that neared them would awake the Vael, who would follow their last orders by jetting into aggressive contact with the intruder. Sometimes they might be armed, either with weapons or just cutting tools. Even a bare-handed Vael has the ingenuity to start sabotaging a ship from the outside. Ancient Vael fields left over from centuries-ago wars remain a navigation hazard in many parts of the Cluster.

MATURE VAEL

LARGE CHANGELING

AC 16 Initiative +1 (11)

HP 93 (11d10 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	20	+5 +5	DEX	13	+1 +3	CON	16	+3 +5
INT	14	+2 +2	WIS	12	+1 +1	CHA	7	-2 -2

Skills Acrobatics +3, Mechanics +5

Resistances Heat

Immunities Cold, Radiation; Exhaustion

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Tactile

CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Vacuum-Bound. The Vael suffers no detrimental effects from being in a vacuum, or from fighting in zero-gee, and it doesn't need to breathe. In zero-gee it has a Fly Speed equal to its Speed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Vael makes two Punch attacks.

Punch. Melee Attack Roll: +7, reach 5 ft. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) Bludgeoning damage.

Bite. Melee Attack Roll: +7, reach 5 ft. Hit: 11 (1d12 + 5) Piercing damage.

Decompression Cannon (Recharge 5–6). Dexterity Saving Throw: DC 14, each creature in a 10-foot long, 10-foot-wide Line. Failure: 22 (4d10) Bludgeoning damage from compressed air and the target is pushed back 30 feet. (If the Vael uses this action in zero-gee, it is launched up to 30 feet in the opposite direction of its target.)



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OTHER CHANGELINGS

There are many other Changelings
to find in the Cluster.

ICARIANS

The Icarians were apparently created for the environment of Kingsnest, a world in the Kiyu-Cerro system. Whether they live elsewhere is unknown, but they thrive in the zero-gee of Kingsnest. They are slim, with legs and arms proportionally longer than a human and their skin frills can flip up on their arms and legs to allow them to glide gracefully in zero-gee.

ICARIAN

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 12

Initiative +3 (13)

HP 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft., Fly 60 ft. (Zero-gee Only)

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	10	+0 +0	DEX	16	+3 +5	CON	12	+1 +1
INT	11	+0 +0	WIS	14	+2 +2	CHA	12	+1 +1

Skills Perception +4, Piloting +5

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Standard

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Evasion. If the Icarian is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the Icarian instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the save and only half damage if it fails. It can't use this trait if it has the Incapacitated condition.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Icarian makes two Blade attacks.

Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) Piercing damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 80/320 ft. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) Piercing damage.



LUCIFORCE

The Luciforge are found across the Cluster, sufficiently widely distributed that it's impossible to guess where they originated from. They are humanoid but unlike anything human. They survive, and even travel, in space and their skin absorbs many wavelengths; they can devour most kinds of radiation without being harmed by it. Their purpose has long been forgotten, but they are the subject of much speculation among Travelers and other humans who travel between stars.



LUCIFORGE

MEDIUM CHANGELING

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 76 (8d8 + 40)
Speed 20 ft.

MOD SAVE			MOD SAVE			MOD SAVE		
STR	12	+1 +1	DEX	15	+2 +4	CON	20	+5 +7
INT	11	+0 +0	WIS	16	+3 +3	CHA	14	+2 +2

Skills History +2, Perception +7, Piloting +4
Resistances Cold, Heat
Immunities Radiation
Senses Passive Perception 17
Languages None
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Radioactive Absorption. Whenever the Luciforge is subjected to Radiation damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of Hit Points equal to the Radiation damage dealt.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Luciforge makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d10 + 2) Piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Protective Wings. *Trigger:* The Luciforge is hit by an attack roll. *Response:* The Luciforge covers itself with its wings, adds 3 to its AC against the attack, possibly causing the attack to miss, and moves up to 30 feet.

MOAKSHA

Moaksha have eidetic memories, possessing a greatly enlarged cerebral cortex capable of storing centuries worth of experiential data which they can recall with exacting precision. They are quadrupeds the size of a small horse but have a humanoid upper torso with two arms. They are highly dexterous, able to perform perfect repetitions of any hand or finger movement for days at a time without rest, making them ideal craftsmen and musicians. Additionally, they have a wide, flat appendage where they store excess fat, allowing them to survive for weeks without food.

MOAKSHA

LARGE CHANGELING

AC 11 Initiative +1 (11)

HP 58 (9d10 + 9)

Speed 40 ft., Climb 20 ft., Swim 20 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4 +4	DEX	13	+1 +1	CON	13	+1 +1
INT	14	+2 +4	WIS	15	+2 +2	CHA	10	+0 +0

Skills History +4, Perception +4

Immunities Prone

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Standard

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Moaksha makes two attacks, using Slam or Rifle in any combination.

Slam. Melee Attack Roll: +6, reach 5 ft. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) Bludgeoning damage.

Rifle. Ranged Attack Roll: +3, range 250/500 ft. Hit: 6 (1d10 + 1) Piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Predictive Parry. Trigger: An enemy that has previously damaged the Moaksha hits the Moaksha with a melee attack roll. Response: The Moaksha adds 2 to its AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss. On a miss, the triggering enemy takes 7 (2d6) Bludgeoning damage, as the Moaksha knocks the weapon back towards the attacker.







CHAPTER 3

AWAKENED

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We brought them with us, our allies in a Cluster we didn't yet understand. But many Awakened have become so much more.



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AWAKENED BEARS

The Bee Hunters



>>>> THE EARTH THAT THE ARKS LEFT WAS FAR FROM

stable. Human industry, warfare, and simple failures of planetary stewardship all contributed to an ongoing ecological crisis that consumed vast portions of the habitable globe. Perhaps they don't teach you this at school. It might be because of the implied culpability of those same powerful people who ordained the arks and whose descendants founded your cities. But ask yourself, why do you think the arks left?

In some areas it was a case of too little. Too little water. Too little clean air. Too little living space. But towards the end a greater problem was often too much. Too many rapidly mutating pathogens, too much poison in the water, and the food chain, just plain too many people living on top of each other in poor conditions. Every year saw a new disease variant tear across the planet, and most of the human population didn't live in areas where you could just isolate and medicate.

The dream of total environmental control has always remained just a whisker out of the human grasp ever since we first had such dreams. Even some of the arkships, with their artificially regulated environments, succumbed to ship-wide epidemics. Towards the end, at least some of Earth's scientists accepted that mastery of the Earth's macrobiome was impossible. A reactive solution was required.

Scientists involved with various Awakened projects had already been working on a swarm-based solution. Flying colony insects were in a unique position to sample a wide area for pathogens and toxins and could be engineered to react by producing appropriate medical assistance based on what they encountered. While they met with some success when deployed on their own, static hives became less and less useful as environmental catastrophe forced entire populations to become mobile. Furthermore, the dedicated human handlers the hives originally relied on were vulnerable and hard to recruit. Thankfully, existing Awakened species were available to fill the gap.

PROJECT BEOWULF

Records carried from Earth by the arks call it "Project Beowulf". A symbiotic relationship between the engineered but non-sentient bees, and the Awakened bears. Bears had been early adoptees of the programs, by their original natures' hardy, adaptable, and intelligent. They and the dogs and pigs had been good practice before scientists turned to the dolphins, the ravens, and the unlikely biology of the cephalopods. On Earth, populations of bears were tasked with travelling with populations of humans wherever resources or reliable technology were in short supply. Nested within their fur, or on panniers strapped to their backs, were the bee colonies that constantly sample and assess the surrounding environment to create honey laced with medicines, antitoxins, vitamin supplements, and whatever other medical help

SERGEI SARGICHEV

their charges might need. Nicknamed “bee-hunters” or “medi-bears”, they carried cross-cultural symbols of healing and neutrality and saved entire communities during Earth’s tumultuous pre-ark years. When the arks were built, many bore bear embryos alongside frozen bee-eggs, or else made use of the bears and their medical skills as an active part of the waking crew.

THE ARK YEARS

Over the subjective handful of generations between there and here—the millennia, to those waiting at the far end of the journey—the bears earned their keep. Space travel can sometimes be good for neither body nor soul. For the former, the bears had their regular medicines to speed-heal injuries, supplement diets, and fight off the sort of persistent infections that life in a big sealed tin can give rise to. For the latter ... well, let’s just say some of the array of medi-bear services to be found in the shadier parts of a port or city had their roots back in the days when we were all still on the boat.

Every ark has its own story of planetfall: that first time their ailing old entropy drives hauled them into sight of one of the Cluster’s multitude of habitable worlds. And sometimes it was a paradise, but more often it was far less habitable than it looked. Given all the friction and the way things have fallen out since, some people will look at you funny if you say the lucky ones got picked up by the Celestials, but that at least meant a welcome and a technologically advanced haven. A safe orbit—well, safe-ish—to get repairs done, someone to talk to, and maybe let you down on-planet to feel the earth between your toes. Except there’s a lot of space out there, and plenty of worlds, and some of them had no masters back then. Some of them don’t even now.

Worlds that had seen war thousands of years before but never gotten over it. Worlds of slow poisons or buried factories ready to start turning out one of a thousand different flavors of death. Worlds where the problem wasn’t too little life but too much. Maybe whatever little Eden the Celestials had left behind had gone tooth and claw since they went looking for excitement elsewhere. Maybe it was an experiment of theirs that they’d get round to studying one of these centuries, but for now was just ravenous for fresh meat. Maybe something genuinely alien, so bizarre that if there was anything of Old Earth in the genome-equivalent it wasn’t detectable by anybody’s science. But the arks were old, some falling apart, some overpopulated because they’d woken too many sleepers, others just desperate for solid ground under their feet. And of the ones who prospered, a lot of them did so by rolling out the bears.

Because of the way their beehives interacted with the environment and the bears’ own mechanical skill in instructing them, they had a decent shot at inoculating and detoxing their way into some kind of working equilibrium with their new homes. It didn’t always work. There are worlds out there that’ll eat bears and spit out the fur. But it worked enough. Where there wasn’t a Celestial welcome wagon ready to catch the refugees, your best friend was a medi-bear.

Of course, that was a while ago—just how long depends on how much you’ve been in transit in the long years since, but the arks are mostly junk now. The worlds they reached that were ever going to be homes for humanity have been colonized. The initial pioneering work of the bears is done, and you’d think their great-great-grandcubs would have packed up their bees and found another way to live. And of course you still find some of them crossing between stars,

SERGEI SANCHEV



bringing their adaptation expertise to crews looking for treasure and secrets on some new world full of dangers. Having a walking medical lab that can bench press a ton is never a bad thing. For the majority of the Centauri Cluster's burgeoning population of Awakened bears, though, they were done with roughing it. As with so many of the Awakened, the question was where a piece as big as a bear would fit in the evolving jigsaw of human society.

Plenty of them have played to type and found their way into the regular medical trades, from self-sufficient dispensers to diagnosticians to combat medics. The original old Earth bees have often been upgraded or improved by now, sometimes with the aid of found technology, sometimes just with the benefit of the wider perspective that a lot of human engineers and scientists have found in the wild reaches of the Cluster. There are narrow skillset bears who have become the acknowledged experts in a particular condition or augmentation, consulted across the breadth of a whole solar system. There are the generalists who've fitted out their multitude of companions for maximum adaptability, ready to tackle any malady they encounter.

Then again, given there's a lot of wild real estate on many worlds, and the bears are by their nature self-sufficient, some of them go feral. Just wander off into the wilderness in families and small groups to live the sort of life their unAwakened ancestors might have enjoyed. Save that they have honey on tap and can cook up drugs to resist disease or allow them to digest all manner of alien delicacies that would have killed an old Earth grizzly. And, despite all their claims of hardy independence, these wild bears still tend to drift into the trader towns and prospecting outposts every so often. Bears like their luxuries, it turns out, even when they also like their living space.

And then there are the others.

There aren't that many worlds where it's all sweetness and light, even for a honey-brewing bear. Whether it's living under the shadow of the Celestials or factional divisions brought over from old Earth or good old-fashioned greed, self-interest, and graft, you can usually find a shadowy district, or a street of ill repute. Even a whole port or orbital, perhaps, where everyone's on the take and everything's run by a complex feudal network of gangs and families and cartels. The bears were bred to be adaptable, after all. After generations in the service of all humanity, small wonder some of them decided to line their own dens and make a healthy profit.

In some ports there are whole shadow-pharmaceutical industries run by bears. Whatever your poison of

choice, they can replicate it, or else they've brewed up something of their own that will take all your past addictions and kick them to the curb. In the criminal hierarchies of many of these worlds, the bears are a kind of aristocracy, setting the rules of the drug trade and commanding high prices. In other dives, less friendly towards the Awakened, they might find themselves no more than the means of production, all but enslaved in windowless factories and laboratories.

And there are rumors of other roles the bears have found, now that human societies have become settled enough to rediscover vice. If a bear can brew a medicine or a stimulant then they can brew a poison, and they just happen to have a thousand readily available vectors for injecting it right into their target. A poison, moreover, that can be personally tailored to the specific metabolism of their victim. More than one detective has come across a suspicious string of deaths that look just like organ failure or anaphylactic shock until they spot where the sting went in.

AWAKENED BEAR

LARGE BEAST [AWAKENED]

AC 13 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 76 (9d10 + 27)
Speed 40 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	16	+3	+5
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	14	+2	+2	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Botany +2, Medicine +6, Perception +6
Resistances Poison, Radiation
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 16
Languages Understands Standard but can't speak
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bear makes two Claw attacks. It can replace one attack with a Bite or Killer Bees attack.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) Slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) Piercing damage.

Killer Bees. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 40 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) Poison damage. If the target fails a DC 13 Constitution saving throw they have the Poisoned condition for 1 minute.

BONUS ACTIONS

Healing Bees (3/Day). The bear can direct its bees to heal one target for 9 (2d8) Hit Points.



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AWAKENED CANINES

The Wolf Switch

»»»» DOGS WERE ONE OF THE EARLIEST SPECIES TO BE AWAKENED.

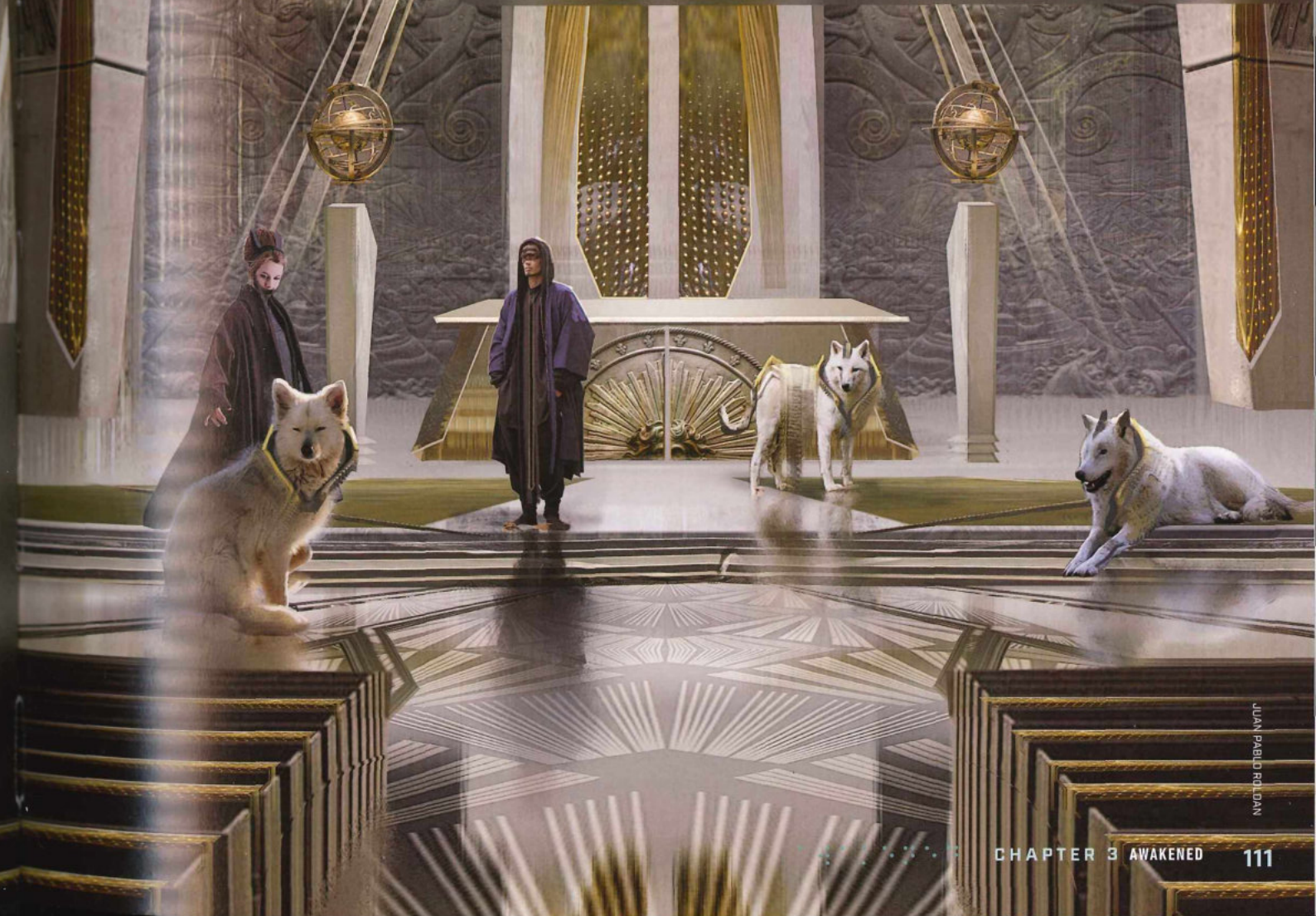
Possibly they were the inspiration for the whole grand endeavor. Forget dolphins or monkeys or pigs, what could be better than elevating humanity's long-time companions to something close to equal partners? Who would make a better sidekick to explore the stars with than the proverbial best friend?

HUMANITY'S BEST FRIEND

Records preserved from Old Earth show it wasn't as easy as the scientists anticipated. And it should have been. After thirty thousand years of being bred and adapted to live within human family groups, dogs were already half-Awakened, closer to a human outlook than even our nearest evolutionary neighbors. Dogs already thought halfway like humans, but what should have been a shortcut to success turned out to be the big stumbling block.

Pigs had been the first Awakening project, albeit mostly as practice for when people got round to dogs. Pigs had a biological proximity to humans that had long given them a somewhat unwilling role in the medical trade. The original and crude Awakening procedures worked extremely well with them. Early patients quickly became "spokes-pigs" for the Awakening lobby, celebrities in their own rights. Everyone was very excited for the next phase that would deliver to them a talking dog that could take itself for a walk.

The results were disappointing.





A FALSE START

The earliest semi-Awakened dogs were ... dull. "Nodding dogs" was the derisive nickname for them. Interacting with them felt a little like dealing with a computer program designed to mimic humanity without every really approximating it. They just agreed with whatever was said to them, chasing their conversational tails round and round without ever going anywhere new. Compared to the incisive intellect of the pigs they were a three-day wonder that people easily tired of. A novelty pet, perhaps, but not a partner. Nothing you'd trust as a nanny for the kids. The problem was in those millennia of domestication. So much of the genetic and behavioral territory that Awakening would normally re-engineer was already heavily modified, and the organic changes didn't mesh with the later technological adaptations. The nodding dogs were simple creatures with, if anything, less personality and volition than regular canines. Those that lived long lives also tended to fall victim to a variety of psychological conditions. Their minds just didn't fit together properly.

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Of course, right now, canines are some of the most common Awakened. You meet them everywhere. So how did the scientists build that domestication into true civilization? It's a testament to how easily people get along with Awakened dogs that almost nobody ever thinks to ask. The answer is that they didn't. They solved the problem by going back in time, peeling away all those layers of human-bred change until they got back to the wolf beneath.

Dogs are wolves, genetically. Behaviorally they're very different. A wolf doesn't herd your sheep or turn up with a leash in its mouth. In leaning heavily on basal wolf characteristics, scientists were able to circumvent all that intervening dogginess and start afresh. There was, in those early days, considerable wariness about what the result might be. People imagined ravening monsters howling through the streets. What they got, though, was ... dogs. Awakened dogs that were sharp, clever, able to interact with people and each other. Everything the project had been after. And still everyone looked at them and waited for the bared teeth and the snarl. Because humans and dogs go back a long way, but humans and wolves go back a lot further.

Life must have been hard for those early dogs. There were so many expectations placed on both sides of their nature. They were expected to be lifelong companions when they'd been made aware enough to have their own life ambitions. They were expected to be tireless servants, when they were smart enough to understand that isn't exactly the best deal in a dangerous world. Military interests wanted them to be obedient but ruthless killers, and a lot of them turned conscientious objector instead. And humans who knew about the wolf inside them expected them to snap, some day. And over time—on Earth, on the arkships, and after



arrival in the Cluster—two different narratives arose about humanity's favorite Awakened. The dog story and the wolf story. Day and night.

Everyone has a dog story. They have a canine co-worker who is the backbone of the team, or a friend who was found and brought home by an emergency services dog. Perhaps a medical dog sniffed out their illness before it could become a problem. Faithful guards, trusted friends, supportive colleagues. Always watching for human responses and following their lead.

Some people have a wolf story. A security specialist who employs a lone infiltrator with a backpack of electronic tricks, who can get in and out of anywhere without leaving so much as a hair. A mercenary who just knows to follow where that sleek grey form leads, tracking their comrade by the trail of carnage. The fugitive who can't shake their hunter no matter what they try or how many worlds they skip. The investigator who gladhands and talks the talk but relies on their lupine contact to bring them the actual information they need. What very few people understand is that the dog-dogs and the wolf-dogs are the same dogs. Not two breeds, just two natures. Every dog is a werewolf-in-waiting.

It's called the Wolf Switch. All Awakened dogs have it. Sometimes it gets flipped by stress and circumstances, but a lot of dogs can trigger it themselves.

A gear-shift of personality and outlook, from the compliant and reactive dog always waiting on human signals and permissions, to the proactive, initiative-taking wolf who doesn't need anyone to tell them what to do. And there are a lot of misunderstandings about what a wolf is, of course. Not innately more aggressive than either dog or human. Not even a loner, because wolves have always been keenly aware of being part of a wider group. But when a dog gets to that point in their work where they can't just patiently listen for their master's voice, a flick of that inner Wolf Switch can give them a new leash on life. Dogs follow and obey. Wolves lead and make decisions. Plus, of course, the widespread belief that Awakened dogs and Awakened wolves are separate breeds can lend a lot of plausible deniability ...

AWAKENED CANINE

LARGE BEAST (AWAKENED)

AC 14 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 37 (5d10 + 10)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	15	+2	+2	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	15	+2	+2
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	15	+2	+2	CHA	12	+1	+3

Skills Insight +4

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Understands Standard but can't speak

CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Aware. The canine has Advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Pack Tactics (Canine Persona Only). The canine has Advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the canine's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't Incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) Piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or have the Prone condition.

BONUS ACTIONS

Savage (Wolf Persona Only). The canine makes a Bite attack with Advantage against a Prone target.

REACTIONS

Wolf Switch. *Trigger:* The canine takes damage.

Response: The canine can switch to its wolf persona. It remains in its wolf persona for 1 minute.



AWAKENED DOLPHINS

AWAKENED DOLPHINS

The Lords of Two Worlds



>>>> TO HEAR THEM TELL IT, DOLPHINS NEEDED PRECIOUS LITTLE

Awakening. It was, they say, not so much a matter of enhancing them to a human level of intellect, as giving them the tools to come down to our level. An exaggeration, true, but it's the case that the majority of alterations made to their genetic stock simply involved expanding those parts of the brain dealing with tool use. Dolphins, as nature provided them, already had the smarts, a complex language, a sense of self, and a social hierarchy. There wasn't much needed to bridge the remaining gap that would let them interact with humans as equals.

Or, perhaps not exactly as equals.

Although several terrestrial species were Awakened first, dolphins had always been part of the plan. Legendarily intelligent, friends of humanity since ancient times, graceful, and charismatic, they had become a symbol of the natural world that humans were supposed to be custodians of. The earliest Awakened dolphins effortlessly took up roles in human society, communicating via speakers in their tanks, entertaining, debating, and contributing to the ongoing scientific effort that would lead to the Exodus from Earth. They were universally loved, the great ambassadors of the animal kingdom, the smiling soul of Gaia herself.



POWERFUL AND INFLUENTIAL

By the time the first arks were ready to depart, the small global community of Awakened dolphins had amassed disproportionate influence over the project, and over many sections of society as a whole. They would vigorously oppose use of the word "cult" but most of them had encouraged a fervent body of followers, both the star-struck poor and the influential rich. These human retinues feuded against each other whilst coordinating against any opposing interests, forming a loose-knit and highly exclusive club known as the Delphinium that wielded considerable temporal power in those last days on Earth. In short, the dolphins tended to get what they wanted. Who was going to go against one of nature's celebrities?

Not only did everyone love them, but they also tended to have the best lawyers. Many of the early arks—especially the more luxurious and well-constructed—had areas set aside for a sea biome where the dolphins could thrive and interact with humans on their own terms. A couple of arks, funded and built expressly by the Delphinium, were almost entirely water-filled, despite the considerable momentum and inertia challenges that presented. There, the human crew lived in cramped quarters down the spine of the ship, save when they were graciously permitted to pay homage to their masters.

What humans on Earth never seemed to realize—what a great many current humans in the Cluster don't get, either—is that just because dolphins are vastly intelligent, graceful, and smile all the time, doesn't mean they are nice. Recovered pre-Awakening science data has a lot to say

about just how dolphins behaved in the wild—though these days the dolphins and their representatives do their best to suppress it. They weren't exactly benign stewards of the sea, no matter how they paint it now. They weren't even that kind to each other. It would be a mistake to assume that their feelings towards humans are entirely benign, ancient legends of maritime rescue notwithstanding.

On the arks, and back on Earth, the dolphins tended to continue the aquatic existence they were comfortable with. They had human cultists—or, let's say adherents, followers, fans, to give them the benefit of the doubt—to do anything that needed a dry pair of hands. In the water, they used cybernetic implants to control manipulator drones to do anything that couldn't be accomplished with their surprisingly nimble snouts. Waited on and provided for, the dolphins probably had the least traumatic ark voyage of anybody. And then came their arrival in the Cluster.

PUSHED ASIDE

There are plenty of worlds with oceans in the Cluster, it's true. If the dolphins had just wanted to go live like their pre-Awakening ancestors, it wouldn't have been a problem. Drop them off on the first sea you come to, so long and thanks for all the fish. By that time, though, the various ark-bound dolphin pods were very used to having humans around and doing things for them. Very used, moreover, to being the center of their own little worlds. The Cluster exploded all of that. Nobody off those latter-day arks was going to be the center of existence, not with forty thousand years of Celestial history, technology, and evolution already layering half the planets.

Humanity arrived, discovered that their own cousins had preceded them by whole subjective historical ages, and then had to scabble for a foothold in a complicated cosmos. Obliging their cetacean celebrities was seldom a priority or even possible. And when humans were able to settle on the shores of some alien sea, their colonization efforts usually turned landwards rather than focusing on aquaculture and dolphin-worship.

There were other new-minted human colonies inland, or there were resources and free land for farming, or there were Celestials and all the danger and opportunity they represented. Even where the Delphinists retained a leadership position on-planet, the bulk of humanity spread in all directions. Some dolphins just took to the freedom and roamed, but the majority, though they had all the seas of any given world to call their own, felt themselves being abandoned.

Over the first few generations of the Cluster colonies, they tried a variety of strategies to avoid being left behind. To bring a dolphin onto land for any length of time requires surgical intervention, primarily to add internal support that an aquatic existence doesn't need. You still find some traditionalist dolphins touring their terrestrial holdings in mobile tanks, and others are carried about open to the air in howdahs and rickshaws and floating couches. Not the most dignified of solutions, and very vulnerable should they find themselves involved in any kind of regrettable violence.

Establishing industry and manufacture was the goal of many early colonies, after basics such as food supply were nailed down. Having so many high-powered neighbors meant more than one entire colony had to evacuate to avoid getting crushed between rival Celestial factions, or to escape unearthed dangers from some ancient war. The ability to produce higher tech replacements and refinements was uppermost in many minds: weapons, robotics, factories, vehicles, spaceships. Where the dolphins and their adherents had influence, many of these industries served an additional purpose: to allow the dolphins to stand on equal footing with humans.

Or better-than-equal.

AWAKENED DOLPHIN

MEDIUM BEAST [AWAKENED]

AC 14 **Initiative** +2 (12)

HP 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 0 ft., Swim 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2	+2	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	12	+1	+1

Skills Deception +3, History +2, Insight +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +3

Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Dolphin; understands Standard but can't speak it

CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Hold Breath. The dolphin can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dolphin makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) Bludgeoning damage. If the dolphin moved 30+ feet straight toward the target immediately before the hit, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) Bludgeoning damage.



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AWAKENED FROGS

The Kay

»»» THE KAY OCCUPY A UNIQUE AND UNCOMFORT-
able place in the history of the Awakened. Whilst the
origin of many of those breeds is by now a matter of
conflicting details and conjecture, the history of the
kay is absolutely known. They were among the very
last to be engineered. They never knew Earth. They
were the children of a single arkship, for all they can
now be found on a hundred worlds across the Cluster.

The Awakened had varying levels of presence on
arkships outbound from old Earth. Some vessels were
crewed entirely by humans, the animals sleeping, or
embryos, or even just genetic code for later reassem-
bly. Other arks had a more egalitarian approach, and
often the presence of crewmembers with different
perspectives and physical capabilities was the differ-
ence between arriving at the Cluster as a live ark or a
dead hulk.

Snowball was an unconventional ark to begin with,
built around a core of comet ice in a design never
replicated. Its founders were likewise an unorthodox
scientific cartel who looked forward to a world where
they could devote themselves to intellectual pursuits
and research while their mundane cares were looked
after. Many of them slept out the generations-long
journey while the mundane maintenance and running
of the ship was left to the Awakened. Pigs were the
majority species, and they ticked through their short-
er-than-human generations in caring for the slumber-
ing scientific community that had created their ances-
tors. And, as it happened, in poring over the prodigious
knowledge database the ship was equipped with.

PREPARING FOR ARRIVAL

The animal crew of the Snowball worked out quickly
enough that their makers anticipated hostile alien
environments when they arrived. The worlds of the
Cluster were an unknown quantity, and none of the
scientists dreamt that other humans would have col-
onized and half-domesticated so many of the planets,
subjective millennia before they arrived. None of the
Celestials' tumultuous and intricate history was within
the parameters of the Snowball's projections. Its mas-
ters were expecting a hard landing and many bitter
years on some alien world before they could get on
with their work. In fact—the Awakened crew worked
out—they were expecting to stay on the Snowball until
any world they found was tamed to their taste. It didn't
take much imagination to work out who they wanted
on the ground doing the hard work.

By that time, the Snowball's crew was at least as
conversant with cutting edge Earth science as the

sleeping humans, especially the genetic engineering
that had created their own gene stock. They had been
improving themselves, fixing replication errors and
hereditary ailments one generation at a time, polishing
the burrs and filling holes in their masters' work. In
the void between stars, Earth far behind but their des-
tination fifty years or more ahead, they decided to go
beyond their brief. Rather than risk their own descen-
dants to the vicissitudes of some unknown world, they
designed a new worker species, working at a more
ambitious scale than their own creators had ever con-
sidered. The kay arose in the laboratory tanks of the
Snowball, deep in the emptiness of space. They were
the second generation, the Awakened's Awakened.

The difficulty their creators faced was that they had
limited to no data on their destination worlds. To justify
their use of time and ship resources to their human
overlords—to avoid becoming their new home's
pioneers—they would have to create something very
special: simultaneously the ultimate generalist and
the ultimate specialist. Just about the only assumption
they felt they could make was that any habitable world
would have liquid water in some form. The kay were
designed as a one-size-fits-all colonist species.

A BOLD NEW EXPERIMENT

Their Awakened creators also needed to find fresh
baseline stock rather than adapting their new creations
from their own gene lines. Not jeopardizing their chil-
dren—in any form—was the whole point of the exercise.
After a battery of abortive experiments, the root species
they saw most potential in was the humble frog.

Cold-blooded vertebrates weren't popular amongst
the human genetic engineers. Their genetics and
biochemistry were complex, having to produce a
wide range of different enzymes to cope with dif-
ferent temperatures. They were also notably less
charismatic than the mammals used by those early
scientists, or even than the birds and cephalopods
they later moved on to. The Snowball crew had the
Earth's whole knowledge of the science to build on,
though, and easily surpassed their own makers. What
had been seen as problems became opportunities.
The ability to produce wide ranges of tempera-
ture-dependent proteins was turned into an adaptive
biochemical factory. The overlarge frog genome sim-
ply provided more space for them to add extra code
and instructions. The porous amphibian skin that, on
Earth, had made so many species vulnerable to dis-
ease and pollution became an intelligent membrane
able to read and react to the outside environment.
Most of all, they made use of the frog life cycle.

The kay can be kept on ice as a jelly-coated mass of eggs indefinitely. Released into the water of any world, they hatch into tadpoles and do their best to adapt, sloughing away capabilities they don't need and selecting from their copious genetic toolkit for the traits that will let them thrive. They are omnivorous, can tolerate salt or fresh water, and a variety of acidities, oxygen levels, and temperatures. What doesn't kill them outright really does make them stronger. As they grow and change shape, they undergo a fast-acting Lamarckian evolution, automatically activating options from the genetic library of solutions built into them. And they grow fast, doubling in size over and over again on a gradually slowing curve. From a thumb-sized squiggle in the water, less than a year should see something like a tadpole with disturbingly human dentition, somewhere from three to eight feet long depending on the amount of organic material available to feed on. And then comes the final transformation. Adult kay lose their tails, gain limbs, and emerge from the water as something like frogs with double-thumbed and dexterous hands. And minds. The voracious tadpole stages are no more than animals. With their limbs and final shape, the adults inherit a sentience already dimly informed by their larval experiences.

HIGHLY ADAPTABLE

Their creators designed "tutelary beacons" that release pheromones the final-instar kay larvae flock to. If there are living handlers available, these can teach the newly emerged kay what they need to know. Otherwise, the beacons themselves are programmed to show them their place in the world. The adult kay brain was engineered to have a hyper development window of a few months in which they learn at a terrifying speed. Language, skills, technology, social relations, all picked up at an accelerated rate until their neurology settles into its end-state and their ability to learn dwindles to merely conventional speeds. A certain level of imprinting and obedience was also originally coded into them as part of this learning period. Their porcine creators had very definite ideas what they were for, after all.

An adult kay that has been through the tutelary process is generally as capable of learning and interacting with others as any Awakened. However, everything else about it can vary wildly. The precise shape, coloration, and capabilities of each generation of kay are entirely derived from their larval experiences. They are born pre-adapted for whichever world they were seeded on. Freezing or boiling water, toxic seas or air, acid rain, the sharp teeth of predators: if the larvae survived an encounter with it, the adults are equipped to deal with it. Two kay from different

batches usually look like wholly different species to a casual observer. Only a certain frogginess unites them. Similarly, their demeanor, personality, and social graces depend on who has access to them during that mental acclimatization period after their final metamorphosis. Most often this is a beacon, or those who seeded the world with their eggs. On other occasions classes of kay develop without outside contact, forming their own insular, feral communities, and devising worldviews and languages without any input from others.

Since the Snowball finally arrived to find star systems already layered in the works of previous colonists, the kay have spread throughout the Cluster. Their precise status is problematic. On some worlds they have been used—as their creators unfortunately intended—as a kind of terraforming labor, kept in ignorance about the greater universe. Other worlds have welcomed them as equals alongside humans and other Awakened, but the kay life cycle presents a unique difficulty when it comes to fitting in. They have no continuity. Each generation of tadpoles grows to become a culture in itself, a repeated exercise in first contact with the fresh batch of adults. They are often hermaphroditic, able to change gender at will, or simply reproduce parthenogenetically, and as amphibians they have no parental bond with their young, nor any drive to nurture them after laying their eggs. Indeed, if the tadpoles develop in a different environment, they won't even resemble their progenitors. Every wave of kay that washes up on the shore finds its own way to adapt to whatever society it encounters, and then eventually is gone. They have no enduring cultural identity, a species whose name is truly writ in water.

FINDING THEIR PURPOSE

Those kay who come to a greater awareness of their place (or lack of it) in the galaxy are often bitter and distrustful. Records from the Snowball are readily available. Unlike most Awakened the entire history of the kay's genesis is in the public domain. They were intended to be the disposable servants of servants. Knowing this, relations between educated kay and other Awakened are often difficult. They usually prefer working directly with humans.

Kay communities often develop fleeting religions and cults as they search for meaning. Others pursue the furthering of knowledge for the good of all, on the basis that they owe as much to every sentient being as they do to any offspring they might produce. Similar philanthropic aims lead them into service with exploration vessels or new colonial ventures, performing freely the tasks that they were intended to



enact through genetic coercion. Some kay arrange for batches of eggs to be shipped between planets—with or without the knowledge of the ship-owner—seeing their mission as to spread their protean species to as many environments and worlds as possible. They are a strange, divided species still trying to find its place.

On many worlds there are feral kay populations that have reached adulthood without any contact. Often these are dangerous planets where settlement was abandoned after the eggs were dropped. The kay prosper in this isolation, and a stranded Traveler on such a world can go from being hunted by one generation to becoming a friend to the next, if they stay alive long enough.

Recently, a disturbing new twist in the history of the kay has emerged. Celestials of the Crown Dominion and elsewhere have taken an interest in the species. There has long been speculation that several of the Changelings that serve Celestials have their roots in animal stock taken from old Earth tens of thousands of years ago, mercilessly altered until very little of the original remains. Some of the more curious and inventive Celestial scientists see something similar in the kay. Word is emerging of laboratories where clutches of hatchlings are exposed to ever more extreme conditions as the Celestials push the limits of metamorphosis to create new and dangerous servants.

KAY

MEDIUM BEAST [AWAKENED]

AC 14 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 32 (5d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft., Swim 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	12	+1	+1	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	14	+2	+4
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	8	-1	-1

Skills Insight +5, Stealth +6

Resistances Acid, Poison

Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Understands Standard but can't speak

CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Amphibious. The kay can breathe air and water

Standing Leap. The kay's Long Jump is up to 20 feet and its High Jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Attack Roll: +4, reach 5 ft. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) Piercing damage. If the target is Medium-sized or smaller, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 11).

Venomous Spit. Ranged Attack Roll: +4, range 15/30 ft., one creature. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) Poison damage



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AWAKENED INSECTS

The Bug Libraries



>>>> **THE THING ABOUT AWAKENING IS, OF** course someone was going to weaponize it. After the early projects had trotted out their successful proof-of-concepts, after the results of the first projects had, in fact, exceeded all expectations, inevitably someone would want to make it kill people.

By then, things had accelerated. The early Awakened species were more intelligent, personable, and human-adjacent than their creators had necessarily anticipated. There might have been a narrow window in which the whole venture could be co-opted to produce living weapons, but before it could be exploited the early Awakened had rights and public sympathy on their side and weren't going to be anyone's disposable murder squad. Interested parties who'd seen a gap in the market had to look elsewhere for useful soldiers that wouldn't be either as telegenic or as human-style smart as the pigs and the wolves. By that time, sights were firmly fixed on extrasolar colonization, and the more aggressive strategists back on Earth were fondly imagining hostile worlds to pacify from orbit with a rain of fire-and-forget Awakened soldiers.

Possibly on the general principle of "what scares most people," the military projects shifted from the regular vertebrate lines to spiders and insects. The idea was that they could essentially be made into programmable biological robots, self-replicating at need, using just enough of the Awakened research to have them understand orders and give reports. Old records from Earth suggests that initial work with social insects like ants was extremely promising and then was very suddenly discontinued for redacted reasons. That neither the hive experiments, nor the locations they were based out of, are ever mentioned again in the records should serve as a caution for anyone thinking about following that particular path. Instead, the researchers turned simply to making arthropods bigger, which turned out to be relatively easy using superefficient gas exchange to level up the critters' respiratory systems and expanding a natural insect ability to use metals to strengthen their exoskeletons. Bugs the size of dogs endowed with high-energy metabolisms proved worryingly easy to bring into the world, but they remained

relatively simple creatures on their own. You just couldn't fit the complex neurology of an Awakened pig, say, in a single spider. What you could do was spread it across several bugs, even of different species, ending up with something that was neither a coherent individual nor a hive but somewhere in-between. A chaotic system that yielded surprisingly nuanced results.

There are a variety of species that go into the mix of a "bug squad" as the composite entities became known. Each undertakes its own particular specialized function for the benefit of the whole. A variety of spider species usually deal with communications and logistics. These spider components expand their individual cognitive capacity by spinning temporary web structures that act as extended cognitive processors and are more flexible and better at making decisions in reduced circumstances. Dragonfly units act as aerial scouts, and their nymph stages perform the same functions underwater. Beetles are saboteurs able to chew through just about anything with metal-reinforced mandibles. Mantis, scorpion, and centipede units act as soldiers and assassins. Each individual is usually a few feet or so long, with the centipedes clocking in at twice that, and otherwise very similar to their tiny ancestral forms. It's safe to say a lot of humans are less than happy that these bug squads exist.

HIVE MINDS

The separate members of a squad exchange information constantly by touch, pheromone, sound, and visual signal. The result is a kind of virtual individual simulated by the interactions of the separate units and varying with the individuals present. With the current generations, around a dozen individuals generates a presence that reacts at a human-approximate level. Adding extra units tends to suffer from dramatic diminishing returns as the squad reaches a ceiling for the amount of information that can be passed moment to moment between members. The separate parts of the whole can split off and undertake individual tasks, but when away from the whole their ability to make complex decisions degrades dramatically, as does any semblance of

personality. When elements of a squad recombine, the resulting individual reconstructs itself from the interactions of the many.

For the original creators, this emergent personality was likely unwelcome. They were building kill squads and world-burning swarms, after all, not something to debate philosophy with. And precisely what is there, with a bug squad, is nebulous. Most humans find it hard to think of a squad as a sentient “individual” at all, but when dealing with a squad remotely rather than face to face, they can come across as surprisingly human, albeit often task-focused and short on small talk. Those who have the stomach to deal with them on a regular basis insist that there is a recognizable continuance of personality when squads break apart and reform, but at the same time it is never quite the same entity as units are lost, get replaced, and have individual experiences. Squads that are entirely out on their own recognizance without a home base can “drift” alarmingly into personalities shaped entirely by recent experience, occasionally even undergoing a catastrophic “Stockholm Syndrome” and taking on the beliefs and goals of their enemies. To combat this, their creators made the first bug libraries.

Libraries look like lumps of rotting wood shot through with mycelial threads. They vary from the size of a fist to several feet across and serve as the memory store and backup for one or more bug squads, as well as a nursery for new units. Used offensively, they are the forward base of a squad assault that the defenders will need to root out. For the squad itself, the library represents continuation and stability of self without which the “I” of the squad’s individual can rapidly degenerate into a nebulous cloud of shifting aims and ambitions.



COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION

There have been plenty of attempts to limit or outright ban the bug squads, but there’s always someone willing to deploy them, and the best way to counter one is—you guessed it—to have your own. There are also several locations across the Cluster where they were deployed and then just left behind. More than one band of scavengers has descended on a ruin to find it busily inhabited by a bug squad whose last orders were to defend the place at all costs. Subsequent negotiations can be tricky, and the newcomers likely have a very narrow window in which to establish that they are not the original enemy. Things only become more complex if one original squad has bred and split into different individuals, each of whom likely carry a less and less accurate recollection of their original mission. Elsewhere, the aftermath of bug squad action might just be a landscape inhabited by disassociated units, smarter than bugs but nowhere near intelligent until sufficient numbers of them bond together again.

What, then, is at the heart of a bug squad? Who are they? The questions are as much philosophy as practical science. In the bug squads, the clash between division and unity is uncomfortably on display. An optimum squad of twelve to fifteen units can process information, make decisions, and communicate as effectively as an individual human. It assesses, reacts, and has aims and goals that arise out of its lived experience. And yet that illusory individual fragments and disappears should the squad’s units disperse or suffer losses. When it replaces its members or pulls itself together the resulting entity has most of the memories and attitudes of its predecessor, but not all. The squad feels a seamless continuity disquieting to those who

deal with it and sense the difference. Squads reduced to smaller numbers become simpler and simpler. Individual units tend to be fanatically focused on their tasks, or just on survival, although the spiders can create their external cognitive structures that lend momentary clarity and decision-making capacity.

Most bizarre of all, individual units from separate squads can bond together to form a new individual with fragmentary memories of several others, often coalescing about a spider and its extended awareness. The full potential of the bug squad system likely remains to be tapped.

OTHER USES

Just because they were made for war doesn't mean that's all they can do—it's more a measure of the attitudes of their makers than the desires of the bugs themselves. There are worlds where bug squads are a part of the community and serve non-military functions, such as mining, construction, maintenance, or security, generally bringing to any endeavor the same single-minded focus they use in combat. It can be hard for humans to relate to them as living individuals rather than just artificial systems or robots, both because of their physical

nature and their frequent lack of social finesse. Some squads use (or share) humanoid mechanical bodies to interact with others, which may or may not bridge the uncanny valley.

On some worlds—often hostile ones—one can find "Compound Cities" built around giant bug libraries. Here, the squads are everywhere, providing all civic amenities, defending the community from outside threats, and ensuring every human inhabitant is fed and cared for. And behaves. Compound Cities always seem to be a bit on edge, as though the locals are living in a dictatorship only theoretically benevolent.

Other worlds do their best to treat squads just like any other inhabitant, giving them space to develop their individual natures. Left to their own devices, the natural inclination of a squad's arisen personality is to preserve itself by enforcing an inner status quo. Sometimes this fails; runaway squad breeding and division become a problem very quickly—for the squads themselves as much as for the humans. Individual squads can't live easily in close proximity without their communications interfering with one another; they disrupt one another's memories and personalities. Another factor not anticipated by the original creators: that the bug squad would need personal space to be themselves.

BUG LIBRARY

HUGE SWARM OF SMALL AND MEDIUM BEASTS (AWAKENED)

AC 16 **Initiative** +4 (14)

HP 75 (10d12 + 10)

Speed 30 ft., Burrow 30 ft., Fly 30 ft. (Hover)

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	9	-1	-1	DEX	19	+4	+4	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	13	+1	+3	CHA	10	+0	+0

Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing

Immunities Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Prone, Restrained, Stunned, Suppressed

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Understands Standard but can't speak

CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Diverse. The bug library is made up of many different bug types, with frequent shifts. It regenerates 10 (1d20) Hit Points every hour, to represent new arrivals.

Swarm. The library can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the library can move through any opening large enough for a Small creature.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The bug library makes two attacks, using Centipede, Mantis, or Mosquito in any combination.

Centipede. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Poison damage.

Mantis. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) Slashing damage.

Mosquito. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) Piercing damage. The bug library regains Hit Points equal to the damage dealt.

Spider Webs (Recharge 5–6). The bug library launches a cluster of webs at a target it can see within 30 feet. The target now has the Restrained condition for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make a DC 14 Strength saving throw, breaking out of the web on a success.

BONUS ACTIONS

Wasp Barrage (1/Day). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 14, one creature within 10 feet that the bug library can see. *Failure:* 11 (3d4 + 4) Piercing damage plus 7 (3d4) Poison damage and the target has the Poisoned condition for 1 minute. *Success:* Half damage only.

AWAKENED
OCTOPUSES

The Kraken

>>>> WHEN WE CAST OURSELVES OUT INTO

the void in search of new homes it was a roll of the die. There were a dozen famous equations predicting how many habitable worlds were out there and whether there would be anyone waiting for us when we arrived, but it was all just a finger in the solar wind. But we had entropy drive technology to cross the void in a realistic timeframe. We had faith that the universe wouldn't turn out to be a barren desert with a single overcrowded oasis. We were desperate. Desperate to escape conditions on our cramped and worn-out world, desperate for a new frontier and new planetary horizons.

People planned as best they could. Not knowing the conditions we'd encounter in the Cluster, they packed every tool available. Awakening projects were already established by the time the first arkships were being built. Look at old recordings of the initial design teams and you'll see more than one snout in amongst the human faces. Going to new worlds with a compliment of enhanced senses and diverse physical capabilities was a given.

Another given, based on Earth biology and the galactic distribution of common elements, was that any world fit for humans would have large amounts of water. Humans aren't a marine species by nature. We have harvested and traveled on the seas for as long as we've been human, just about, but we always return to land. Submarine engineering has a long history, but it was always complicated by the fundamentally hostile medium. Awakened dolphins and seals were an early attempt to solve these problems, but they suffered from a lack of fine manipulation and a reliance on breathing air. The eyes of the Awakeners turned to less human-like solutions.

Octopuses were an obvious subject. In their natural state they were already highly intelligent, good at problem solving and with dealing with complex environments. They came pre-equipped with the ability to use tools and engage in complex manual tasks. Buoyed by past successes, the idea of a friendly octopus workmate for deep-sea engineering seemed just a step away.

PROBLEMATIC ALLIES

The reality proved very different. Octopuses proved difficult. Their basic biology was a world away from the mammal species the teams had previously worked on. Their mental architecture was even more alien, minds split between a central brain and a distributed network of semi-independent arms. The initial results of the projects produced maverick, unpredictable intelligences that combined a frustrating unwillingness to cooperate in any way with a dangerous ability to escape captivity. Prototype "sea-hand" octopuses used in the early days of ark construction were fitted with cybernetic governors to override their natural predilections and keep them on-task. A far cry from anything truly Awakened and a practice later abandoned as both inefficient and cruel. To the research teams, the failures were profoundly aggravating because the innate intelligence of their research subjects was very apparent. It seemed a gap they couldn't bridge.

The other major problems they ran into were rooted in octopus lifestyle and life cycle. They were not a naturally social animal, which complicated any job requiring more than one octopus at a time unless you budgeted for your workers eating each other. The majority of octopus lifespans are very short, and most species die immediately after breeding, making intensive octopus engineering uneconomical. For a long time, as the arks moved towards completion, it looked as though octopuses were going to get left off the boat. Only the pressing need for ocean work on Earth, and the predicted requirement for it in the Cluster, led to the continuation of the work.

The lifespan problem was solved first, making further work on all the other problems worthwhile. A longevity process that led to runaway cancer growth in humans turned out to be spectacularly effective with octopuses. By flooding octopus blood with telomerase, the resulting cephalopod cells were able to divide and repair themselves indefinitely without loss of genetic integrity. In plain language: they didn't age. While many longevity treatments in humans led to senility and memory collapse (one reason that Imperial Celestials prefer to move from body to body), the distributed octopus brain

was better able to process and edit the additional learning and storage load of a longer life. That same increased mental capacity was a prerequisite to solving the other major issue and making an Awakened octopus able and willing to interact with humans and other sapient animals—and other octopuses, for that matter.

HUMAN CULTURAL SATURATION

Human cultural saturation was only ever intended as a stopgap, but nobody has ever worked out a better solution. It's still the process by which Awakened octopuses relate to us here and now in the Cluster. It leaves entirely open the question of whether the octopus you are talking to is really "there". One of the great octopus' talents is mimicry—originally of color, shape, and texture via their malleable bodies. With increased mental capacity, this mimicry expanded to include behavior and socialization. Surrounded by humans, Awakened octopuses adopt human traits and interact in human ways. They can get frighteningly good at it very quickly. If you were to start a dialogue with a deep-sea research base on some ocean-heavy world right now, you wouldn't necessarily know if it was a human or an octopus you were dealing with. Moreover, you might speak with both at different times and not notice the substitution.

Awakened octopuses were intended to mimic a general level of humanity, but in practice they usually mimic individual humans they are familiar with, or else combine traits and mannerisms from people they know. It can be profoundly disconcerting to work with one, and find the octopus steadily becoming more like you, adopting quirks and figures of speech you weren't even aware you had. How well this goes on long-term assignment with an octopus, says a lot about how much you really like yourself. Some people love the echo chamber, others begin to realize why they have so few friends.



In modern times, most human-settled worlds with coastal habitation and large oceans have an octopus population. Not necessarily an octopus community. Octopuses tend to remain stand-offish with their own kind and work far better with humans or other Awakened than with another octopus. When they are a part of a group or a wider community they are exactly as helpful and sociable as those around them—or as problematic and unsociable if that's how things go. If you want to get a sense of what a new world or group is going to be like, to work with or live in, go find an octopus. Most of the time they'll show you a shorthand sketch of the wider community they are a part of. Right up until the point they're left alone for any period of time.

The process isn't a permanent change. It is renewed moment to moment. Where the Awakened octopuses are left to their own devices, that human mimicry sloughs off them quickly enough and they revert to ... something else. Not a pre-Awakened state, by any means, but not something that responds in a human way. Re-exposed to humans or other species, they re-acquire a new mimicked personality, but it won't be anything like their previous one, sometimes to the distress of former colleagues. Awakened octopuses have a continuity of intelligence and memory without a continuity of personality. The individuals they appear to be, when amongst humans, are plainly detached from their core selves.

The true nature of Awakened octopuses is hard for human researchers to study. In a weirdly quantum way, the act of observation changes the thing being observed, so that octopuses being studied quickly become an active part of their own research, and thus cease to provide meaningful

data. One melancholy conclusion scientists have come to is that the independent spread of the species remains problematic. Whilst octopuses don't simply shut down and die after breeding, there remains some deep-buried part of them that tells them they should. They tend to go through periods of psychological trauma, anxiety, and depression after fertilizing or laying eggs, and many don't survive the process even though there's no hard biological reason they shouldn't. Those that do survive show no parental care, and humans are often required to care for the eggs and offspring, to provide them with necessary education, and to induct them into wider Cluster society.

MANY ARMS, MANY FACES

And then there are those octopuses who survive the breeding process, or simply don't breed at all, and just keep getting older. The longevity treatments built into their genomes mean that, other than by misadventure, they just keep living. There are octopuses within the Cluster who still harbor memories of Earth and the arkships and all the generations that have come and gone since. While octopuses that are part of human or multispecies groups tend to remain at a body mass a little under that of an average human, those left to their own devices can just keep growing, and they become true giants of the deep.

Modern octopuses living alongside humans, with that constant contact to upkeep their personality constructs, are easy to get on with. Or as easy to get on with as you are, anyway. If you have a problem with them, perhaps you should look in the mirror. On some worlds, there are offshore colonies where numbers of octopuses live uneasily as neighbors. Their grudging tolerance of each other is in marked contrast to the human-like personas that they put on like a set of clothes when they work alongside non-octopus fellows. In fact, the maintenance and governance of large octopus communities is almost always dealt with while the inhabitants are away from home. While they have their "human" faces on, they can meet far more peaceably with others of their own kind, make plans, and resolve disputes. Humans need octopus personality mimicry to work with the octopuses, but the octopuses need it to work with each other.

On some lonely ocean-heavy worlds, where human attempts at settlement have come and gone, ancient kraken have been maintaining and improving networks of seabed facilities for reasons that have mutated far past any human purposes, grown vast and strange in their isolation. Precisely what a human might find themselves interacting with, should they contact such a long-lived and isolated leviathan, is unclear. Any

mimicked humanity would surely only be the tip of the vast submerged iceberg of octopus intellect.

Elsewhere, octopuses cut off from human society have encountered Celestials and Changelings and mimicked them just as seamlessly as they do with humans. To a Celestial this might be seen as flattery or punished as insolence. To Changelings, with their often task-focused outlooks, the mimicry might be indistinguishable from the real thing. Human attempts to exploit this facility to learn more about the Celestials who rule the Cluster run into the problem that, while the octopus is talking to you, they can't provide much information about their life as a Celestial-mimic because the octopus is no longer that individual.

Thus far, nobody has been able to put an octopus in practical contact with the Elohim. Nobody is entirely sure what might happen.

AWAKENED OCTOPUS

LARGE BEAST (AWAKENED)

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 52 (8d10 + 8)
Speed 10 ft., Swim 60 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	17	+3	+3	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	13	+1	+1
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Deception +2, Mechanics +2, Perception +4, Piloting +4, Stealth +6
Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 14
Languages Understands Standard but can't speak
CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Underwater Camouflage. The octopus has Advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made while underwater.

Water Breathing. The octopus can breathe only underwater but can hold its breath for 1 hour while out of water.

ACTIONS

Tentacles. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 15 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 16). While Grappled, the target has the Restrained condition.

REACTIONS

Ink Cloud (1/Day). *Trigger:* A creature ends its turn within 5 feet of the octopus while underwater. *Response:* The octopus releases ink that fills a 20-foot Cube centered on itself, and the octopus moves up to its Swim Speed. The Cube is Heavily Obscured for 1 minute.



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AWAKENED PIGS

The Best Friend

>>>> **THEY WERE THE FIRST, BECAUSE THEY WERE EASY. PIGS WERE PART** of human bioscience since long before the Awakening projects. Organ compatibility and ready availability meant they were our "research assistants" in a variety of ways. And the history goes back far further, of course. Cultural aversions, walking resources, bad reputations, incarnations of filth and greed. We've always had a complex relationship with swine. It's been a hard thing for sapient pigs to get to grips with.

The first Awakening experiments generated success stories far faster than anyone anticipated. A talking pig, like some prodigy from a child's story, was able to contribute to the news reveal of its own creation. The first generation of Awakened swine, short-lived and afflicted by a variety of biological issues still to be ironed out, were willing partners in the creation of the second. Pigs have been falling over themselves to help us ever since we gave them a voice.

They were ethical pioneers, too, back in those early days. There was a lot of Wild West in the way Awakened research began. The work outstripped any kind of legal framework over what you could do with a fully aware animal, or to it. It's not exactly a period of history that anyone prioritized teaching, aboard the arks or afterwards, but there were plenty of abuses.



Anti-Awakening groups spread lies about ravening bloody-tusked boars hungry for human flesh. Pro-Awakening groups had whole roadmaps laid out for the dangerous and unsavory jobs their creations could be consigned to. In those early days the Awakened were just animals, and there weren't many laws governing what humans could do to animals, most especially pigs.

The first Awakeners did their work too well, in a way. If they'd just made a dumb brute that could understand instructions and didn't complain, the history of human-Awakened relations might have been very different. Pigs in their natural state already had the potential for a great deal of cognitive sophistication, though. Just a little work on a handful of areas of their brain and they were picking up human language and concepts and an understanding of their place in the world. Their talk—initially through artificial voice boxes and then from surgically-altered larynxes—was articulate and human from the start. In surpassing their creators' expectations, they also undid the plans that their owners and makers had for them. The wave of laws granting protections and rights to Awakened animals came about because the pigs turned out to be so eloquent and charismatic. They never revolted—in either sense. They just talked, garnered sympathy, encouraged human pressure groups. At the same time, they remained deeply involved in the field that had created them. There were porcine scientists amongst the teams working on other species. Pigs won prizes for furthering the reach of human science. If they were going to be involved in some part of the research process in any event, they had very much worked out which side of the divide it was better to be on.

PORCINE PIONEERS

Plenty of pigs ended up on the arks—bodily, rather than just as genetic potential for later re-creation like a lot of Awakened species. By that time, they were a familiar part of human culture on Earth, working hard to overcome centuries of cultural aversion and negative stereotypes. There was a lot you could do with a hypersensitive nose on an ark, just as there is on a modern spaceship. Plenty of problems with atmosphere balance or runaway biological contamination are apparent to a pig even before the artificial telltales pick them up. Beyond that, pigs are smart. Many earned their place on the crews purely for their intellectual achievements; the acute senses were just a bonus.

There are horror stories, from those traveling days. Probably just stories. Almost certainly there wasn't really some ark with a desperate food shortage, where the human crew voted to thaw out the pigs. That's just one more bad taste spacer tale.

Pigs were a part of the vanguard from the earliest days of Cluster settlement, in a variety of different roles. When you see later recreations of those days, most likely the pig character is an administrator sitting safely behind closed doors or back on the ship, but there were plenty of hardy frontier pigs right from the start. By that time, Awakened pigs ranged from half the size of a human to as big as a small truck, and there's not much that stops half a ton of determined boar. After being such an integral part of the early Awakening work, pigs had worked hard to give future generations of their own kin as many options as possible. There's a lot of variety amongst Awakened pigs, and a lot of latent adaptation that harsh conditions can bring out. A soft-seeming city pig can develop a thicker skin, a more active metabolism, improved resistance to cold and heat, even tusk growth triggered by stress hormones.

Since coming to the Cluster, pigs have worked very hard to usurp the title of "Man's Best Friend". Everyone knows an eatery run by a pig, whether it's a low dive off a spaceport or an elegant restaurant for the richest gourmets. Plenty of working trades still make use of their noses—maintenance, pest control, chemical labs, perfumiers. And while the average Awakened boar might prefer a safe and settled job, there are still plenty to be found on the expanding fringes of human society, on ships and on untamed worlds. They are built by science and nature to endure, adapt, and survive and they've been placing those traits at human disposal since they first came out of the lab. They're almost suspiciously eager to help. Because they have a problem. Pigs understand that they are meat.

AN UNCOMFORTABLE HISTORY

The stories about what happened on those arks really are just stories. Probably. Pigs heard them too, though. It goes beyond that. From their earliest generations, Awakened pigs have been smart enough to research the history of human-swine relations and it didn't make for happy reading. More than any other Awakened species, pigs were first and foremost a resource, for scientific research or worse. And we've come a long way from then, and you wouldn't go to a diner now and expect real bacon, but the pigs have seen how the sausage is made. Plenty of their philosophers have concluded that human attitudes to them could take a U-turn quickly enough if things got bad. For that reason, most pigs work very hard to make themselves valuable and popular neighbors. Unlike many species, they tend not to openly segregate, but integrate with humans as much as possible, adopting local customs and interests and even names. At the same time, most settlements still

have a distinct pig community, even if it exists only as a distributed virtual gossip network. Those pigs who stick out by going their own way and refusing to knuckle under tend to get censured by their fellows and cut off from support. That goes double for anyone involved in anything even remotely criminal. There is always a fear that the notoriety of one pig could lead to repercussions against others.

Most humans—especially settled humans who’ve only ever seen them in civilized surroundings, have an idea of the average pig as comical and unctuous. Reliable, a good subordinate, definitely not leader potential. For their part, pigs tend to be very happy as seconds-in-command and prefer to avoid the exposure of being visibly in control. On some space stations or ports there’s a whole hereditary class of administrators entirely composed of pigs, who are the only ones who know how everything works and where all the vital components are, but they still tend to at least find a human figurehead who is ostensibly in charge. Their adaptable nature means they’re the Awakened breed most ubiquitous within wider human society, and so they also often end up acting as go-betweens from humans to other species. This can earn them a reputation in some quarters as “more equal than others” but it’s generally undeserved. Pigs understand they have just as much of an interest in keeping the wolves happy as the humans.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Of course, there are always exceptions to playing well with others. Hard human company breeds hard swine. Pigs who work alongside pioneers or mercenaries, boars that are part of scavenger crews, they might surprise humans who’ve only ever known cheery middle managers, therapists, and restaurateurs. It can be a real education traveling from the heart of a city out to some wild frontier with a pig, watching your companion’s demeanor change from deferential and compliant to alert and rugged. Many Awakened individuals who live both indoor and outdoor lives have had their biochemistry engineered so that, in the wild, they transform into a tougher, faster animal altogether, overlocking their body into a feral hog mode that would terrify their colleagues back at the office. Explorers and soldiers will tell you there isn’t much in the Cluster that matches an augmented Awakened boar for resourcefulness, courage, or endurance.

An unexpected side-effect of their eagerness to get on with people is an affinity for dealing with Changelings. Because the engineered servants of the Celestials are bred for such specialized roles, humans usually find it difficult to interact with them on any meaningful level. Pigs, being very used to

observing their neighbors and tailoring their behavior to match, are often able to relate to the Changeling mind in ways humans struggle to. Where human communities live up against the Celestials and their servants, you usually find a clandestine community of pig intelligencers building tenuous bridges with the local breeds of Changeling. They do their best to exploit those channels for as much advanced intelligence on their masters’ plans as possible. With such neighbors, you can never be too forewarned.

The same empathy absolutely doesn’t extend to the Celestials themselves. They’re most often seen as representing the worst excesses of humanity, as the heedless user and abuser of other species. Celestials scare pigs, because the generations of charm and empathy and service that have saved them from the human chopping block won’t work with creatures that have no real empathy even for their distant cousin humans. The loose-knit Awakened pig thinktanks and discussion groups view any contact with Celestials warily and keep close tabs on human interactions with them. The last thing they want is for humans to get any closer to their hyper-evolved cousins.

AWAKENED BOAR

MEDIUM BEAST [AWAKENED]

AC 12 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 40 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2 +2	DEX	11	+0 +0	CON	12	+1 +1
INT	12	+1 +3	WIS	12	+1 +1	CHA	14	+2 +2

Skills Perception +5, Persuasion +4
Senses Passive Perception 15
Languages Understands Standard but can’t speak
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Aware. The boar has Advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Enduring Ally. If damage reduces the boar to 0 Hit Points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 plus the damage taken. On a successful save, the boar drops to 1 Hit Point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The boar makes two Tusk attacks.

Tusk. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) Slashing damage. If the boar moved 20+ feet straight toward the target immediately before the hit, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) Slashing damage.



THE KINDESS

AWAKENED RAVENS

The Kindness

THE CHALLENGE OF AWAKENING BIRD SPECIES

was never solved on Earth. Not for want of trying. Just as birds have inspired humanity since our earliest days, with their freedom of the air that has often seemed the next thing to divine, so the dream of pairing a human-level intellect to that liberty was an elusive dream for the Awakener scientists. They came close but failed. Only the arkships themselves provided a solution. One ark in particular.

The Morrigan was even named after ancient raven mythology. Eschewing the dense and subdivided architecture of many ships, it was constructed as an empty shell with a central pylon holding most of the support systems and providing light and warmth to the inside of its hollow world. The active human inhabitants lived on the inside of the hull, over a deep layer of their frozen fellows who slept out the journey. Rotational forces granted them a weak attachment to the hull, but the central space shaded towards zero-gee at the center. A human could fly—clumsily—with artificial wings, but the true masters of the domain were the Awakened ravens. In the light gravity they could be grown large enough to give their enhanced brains room, without losing any of their mastery of the air. They were the Morrigan's crew, maintaining and repairing the ship through its subjective century of flight.

The natural raven toolkit gave them a lot of advantages. They were intelligent, curious, had a keen eye

for detail, and prodigious memories. Plus, though it was somewhat beyond the brief their creators had set them, they were very keen to take apart imperfect things and improve upon them. Although they'd been intended as instinctive engineers, they soon expanded this tendency to less tangible projects, such as themselves. By the time the Morrigan arrived in the Cluster, the ravens and the humans they tended had solved the remaining logistical problems of giant bird anatomy and were ready to deploy Awakened birds capable of flight under full Earth gravity or higher.

The results were highly engineered creatures with a fifteen-foot wingspan, as large as any extinct raptor that had shadowed the skies in prehistoric times. The hollow spaces of their organic-composite bones were designed to link with their respiratory systems, allowing for colossally efficient metabolic activity. The dream of the early scientists had finally been realized and ravens the size of a human could fly inside a world's gravity well with all the agility of their diminutive ancestors. With their incisive Awakened minds, they considered themselves more than ready for the challenge of any world they came across.

They called the planet they found Greymountain after its rugged topography. You won't find that name on modern navigation maps, though. You'd need to look for "New Ruin" instead. As you might guess, things didn't go well there.





HEROES OF GREYMOUNTAIN

It seemed a good world, though more for the ravens than the humans. The continent chosen for settlement was dominated by mountain ranges thrown up (so they thought) by a tumultuous geological past. The terrain was resource-rich, with conveniently common deposits of a variety of normally rare elements that would give the new colony's infrastructure a healthy boost. While the land was oddly denuded, the seas thronged with Earth-compatible life ripe for aquaculture. The major difficulty for humans was that the terrain made travel problematic and interfered with communication. The ravens were ready to take up the slack, scouting and carrying messages and light loads. They became the connective tissue that held the world together, forever exploring further afield. Carrying instruments designed for their shape and needs, they spearheaded the human mining and reclamation efforts, tracking down rich seams and deposits of yttrium and dysprosium. Suspiciously rich. There are reasons these elements are rare at a galactic level, after all, and yet on Greymountain they were just waiting to be dug out, not even buried deep. Soon after, the raven explorers found the first ruins.

They weren't the first to come to Greymountain. The convoluted and barren terrain wasn't just the result of past natural upheavals. Nobody had coined the term "Remnant" yet. The encounters on Greymountain were some of the first.

They disturbed the dead, and the dead were restless. Exactly what the ancient history of Greymountain had been remains unknown. Despite the mineral wealth there, few have been desperate enough to return and nobody has brought any answers back. Once activated, Remnant units began issuing out of multiple hidden redoubts with the sole aim of extinguishing any trace of sentient life on the world they'd been set to guard.

The evacuation wouldn't have been possible without the ravens. Electronic communications went down across the planet, the victim of a vast EMP and viral attack. It was the ravens that got

the bulk of the settler population off planet, guiding them around the relentless enemy, fielding diversions, even fighting airborne Remnant units head-on where necessary. They got everyone they could back to the Morrigan and fled the system, because by then the Remnants had reactivated their anti-orbital batteries.

KEEPERS OF HISTORY AND SECRETS

By the time the Morrigan reached a neighboring system, other arks had already established colonies there and were able to offer succor to their neighbors. The settlers from Greymountain and their raven allies spread out across the Cluster over the years. The humans were mostly able to put their experiences behind them after a generation. The ravens weren't. They had been the Morrigan's continuity and memory since the old ship left Earth. A constant exchange of information was second nature to them, and even after they had spread between star systems, ravens continued to talk to ravens.

Even with the irregularities of interstellar travel meaning individuals end up generations out of step, ravens almost always touch base with their fellows wherever they make landfall, exchanging news and catching up on the status quo. Stretched between all the ravens of the Cluster there's a kind of loose group memory so that, give it enough time, anything one of them knows filters out to all the others. They like to be informed and there isn't much that they don't see.

For this reason, ravens are often information brokers by trade. By personality and inclination, they tend to be gossips, trivia addicts, and eager confidantes. They love secrets—their ancestors coveted shiny things and there's nothing shinier than new information. They often trade like for like when it comes to news, and the price of what you want to know can turn out to be the thing you don't want to tell them. Behind the scenes, the raven lust for knowledge has a number of less reputable elements to it. Individual ravens are often interested in the latest means of intercepting communications and infiltrating networks. The same aptitudes that let them process vast geographical areas and solve spatial

problems tend to make them agile code-breakers. If a raven wants to know something, the only place to keep the information safe might be in your head. And, given the capabilities of some Celestials, maybe not even there. Ravens are consummate scavengers, more than happy to make use of any tools they can repurpose to their own desires.

The events on Greymountain—New Ruin—cast a long shadow, and the ravens remember. They recall just how carefully they and their humans planned the colonization, and how badly it all went wrong. It was flawed, and ravens can't help but pick at flawed things. They have a compulsion to pull them apart and reassemble them into something that functions better. It goes all the way back to the days when they were just the repair crew of the Morrigan and not a Cluster-spanning network of spies and information traders.

PLOTS AND CONSPIRACIES

Raven exposure to the wider human civilization across the Centauri Cluster has shown them a lot of imperfect things. Like many Awakened, they have gone considerably beyond the intents and parameters of their creators' original aims. What is the point, they might ask, in fixing a broken conduit or improving an expert system's efficiency, when the systems that gave rise to those flawed things remain? Whilst individual ravens might still poke their beaks into the small things, their community as a whole has larger aims. Philanthropic aims, they would assert. When ravens get together in their croaking parliaments, they discuss how to improve and perfect human societies to be proof against disasters like Greymountain. Which sounds all very laudable until you understand that to fix something you usually have to take it apart first.

There is a conspiracy, working in individual cells separated by light-years and decades. Sometimes it exploits existing fractures to overturn social order and usher in new governments. Sometimes it's as simple as extortion or propaganda campaigns, because ravens always fight using information if they can. Sometimes the structures they want to dismantle are entrenched. They have brought down regimes. They have started wars. The most extreme raven cliques have engineered disasters and invasions every bit as disastrous as the events on New Ruin. For a good cause, they would insist, though you might be forgiven for thinking they just like taking things apart to see all the pretty pieces strewn about. The second-worst excesses of their philosophy are seen where multiple raven groups are working at cross-purposes, because the time differential of interstellar travel can result

in their factions being entirely out of step with one another. The worst excesses are where ravens decide that their aims are best implemented by recruiting the inadvertent aid of Celestials or even old Remnant technology to provide a particular human society with the right impetus for change.

The trauma endured by the crew of the Morrigan should have passed into history by now. The ravens were engineered too well, though. They were made for cultural continuity, and so the wound of what they went through won't heal. Instead, it's been replicated across the Cluster.

Individual ravens have become aware that their drive to help is turning steadily into something profoundly dangerous. In trying to "fix" a problem that is too vast and nebulous to ever be fixed—meaning the whole of human habitation across the Cluster—individual raven cells spiral into ever more grandiose and hazardous schemes. Competing philosophies of social change and ethical utilitarianism do battle between different waves of raven thinkers. Each time their machinations fail to bring about the intended better world, there's always a bird with a more extreme solution. One of these days perhaps the ravens are going to lose patience and just decide to remake human society from scratch.

AWAKENED RAVEN

MEDIUM BEAST (AWAKENED)

AC 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 36 (8d8)
Speed 10 ft., Fly 60 ft.

MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE			
STR	9	-1	-1	DEX	15	+2	+4	CON	11	+0	+0
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	11	+0	+0

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Understands Standard but can't speak

CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Flyby. The raven doesn't provoke Opportunity Attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The raven makes two Beak attacks. It can replace one attack with a Talons attack.

Beak. Melee Attack Roll: +4, reach 5 ft. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) Piercing damage.

Talons. Melee Attack Roll: +4, reach 5 ft. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) Slashing damage.



CHAPTER 3 AWAKENED

AWAKENED SCAVENGERS

The True Survivors





>>>> THE INITIAL AWAKENING PROJECTS WERE

backed by governments and corporations (and entities that combined the characteristics of both), and as soon as the research yielded reliable results the first sapient animals were created in bulk. Aware and intelligent, and winning rights to personhood soon after their inception, they were still made for a purpose. We left our homeworld on the backs of a zoo and arrived in the Cluster armed with a weaponized bestiary to deploy on any new green world we found.

Once those big projects had become established science, the field was open to smaller operators: specialists, the individually wealthy, and the eccentric could try their own hands at Awakening. There was a whole world of animal taxa out there. People wanted to know what a lion would say if it could speak and hear what it was like to be a bat from the bat's own lips.

Whilst canine Awakened forms were commonplace by then, there were several attempts to Awaken cats, with varying success. Other laboratories looked at a variety of semi-urban animals still living alongside humanity on the basis that they likely possessed an intellectual flexibility that would assist with Awakening and, allow them to be trained at specialist tasks. A slew of small batch artisanal Awakened were produced from a woefully unregulated field of research. "Companions" that were little more than sentient pets or toys, infiltration models designed by independent security agencies, and some that were just vanity projects by those who had the resources. Most of these odd little lines never left Earth, and none of them got on the arks in sufficient numbers to become a self-sustaining population. However, a

cross-section were brought aboard by their owners or creators, along with the technology to artificially breed more. Often, they became passengers without ever consenting to it. Legal protections against enforced service often melt away in the presence of sufficient money.

As well as cats, the other major root-stock of this zoological miscellany included a variety of hardy survivors: foxes, raccoons, opossums, and several mustelid species. In stark contrast to the more numerous Awakened breeds, they had no set role, either aboard ship or when the arks eventually arrived. They were intended as status symbols at best, something close to personal property. There are no stories of hardy frontier worlds tamed by teams of Awakened raccoons or built by weasels. The main benefit these misfits received from Awakened intelligence was an understanding of their own fundamental pointlessness. They also quickly worked out that their continued existence was entirely dependent on their owners' goodwill. There just weren't enough of any given type of them to escape off into the wild and form a long-term community, and many individuals were sterile as a side-effect of imperfect engineering. If people grew tired of them, there simply wouldn't be a viable next generation. Records from the time suggest this was not only a side effect of their creation, but an official policy of population control for untested and unstable gene-lines. You can bet the misfits worked that one out, too. By the time the arks reached the Cluster, the new generations of pet and vanity Awakened were mostly very good at getting where they weren't wanted and finding out things they weren't supposed to know. It bred a cynical worldview that's still very much in evidence today.

LIVING ON THE FRINGES

Despite these limits, a lot of those private Awakened projects went AWOL in the early days of colonization. They didn't just head out into the wild. Most of them wouldn't have been able to survive it. They lacked the skills and the hardiness, and many of them remained dependent on medical or vitamin supplements because of inherent flaws in their design. They found niches at the fringes of the expanding human settlements instead, going feral, getting together with like minds from the mélange of species and breeds that had been dragged along for the ride. Sometimes they ended up in a symbiotic relationship with the human colonists, performing necessary tasks, keeping watch, carrying news. In larger settlements, where there was trash, you'd find Awakened picking over it. Little bands of disparate animals, bound together purely by a kindred bitterness. Always careful not to antagonize the humans to the point of provoking a punitive response, but adamantly not part of whatever the people were doing.

In those early days, nobody had the time to be particularly worried about where it was all going. After

all, the humans knew it wasn't going anywhere. The scavenger species just weren't biologically viable. It wasn't as though a cat and a fox were going to have a litter together, after all.

Yet they're still with us all these generations later. You generally find them—if you know where to look—on worlds with a larger human population, big cities with plenty of hidden places. Or, alternatively on worlds where reversals have resulted in abandoned places and ruins that can still be repurposed, resources lying around for the taking. Off world, there is usually a little group of them on any large station or even the hulks of the old arks themselves. Where a world has a lot of infrastructure in orbit, look for them to have a base in some abandoned piece of wreckage they've resecured and repurposed, fitted out with a docking bay for their cobbled-together shuttles.

They remain tied to humanity and its things whilst refusing to be an active part of anything we build. Most often, the only humans they deal with are themselves rogue freelancers, criminals, and shadowy agencies. The scavengers are just as willing to shake hands with agents of some Celestial faction—and as quick to cut them off when things get too complicated. They form an invisible underclass and an extended social network around and beyond the formal boundaries of the local human community. Which can be very convenient for anyone trying to get things done outside official channels.

AWAKENED CAT

MEDIUM BEAST (AWAKENED)

AC 13 Initiative +3 (13)
HP 22 (5d8)
Speed 50 ft., Climb 40 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	8	-1 -1	DEX	16	+3 +3	CON	10	+0 +0
INT	10	+0 +0	WIS	14	+2 +2	CHA	11	+0 +0

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7
Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 16
Languages Scavenger; understands Standard but can't speak it
CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Jumper. The cat's jump distance is determined using its Dexterity rather than its Strength.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cat makes one Pounce attack and uses Prowl.

Pounce. Melee Attack Roll: +5, reach 5 ft. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) Slashing damage, or the cat deals 8 (2d4 + 3) Slashing damage if it had Advantage on the attack roll.

Prowl. The cat moves up to half its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks. At the end of this movement, the cat can take the Hide action.

VARIANT SCAVENGERS

Remove the **Awakened Cat's** Multiattack and Prowl features and add one of the following features to create a different kind of Awakened scavenger:

Arc Welder (Attack). Melee Attack Roll: +5, reach 5 ft. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) Heat damage.

Digger (Trait). The scavenger has a Burrow Speed of 20 feet.

Elude (Reaction). Trigger: An attack hits the scavenger. Response: The scavenger adds 2 to its AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.

Lucky (Reaction). Trigger: The scavenger rolls a 1 on a D20 Test. Response: It can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Sneaky (Bonus Action). The scavenger Hides, even if it is only Lightly Obscured.

03 01

OTHER
AWAKENED

Celestials have created fierce
Awakened of their own.



IMPERIAL HYENAS

Hunting in packs, Imperial hyenas are often used to subdue conquered cities, enforcing curfews and dispensing justice against those who fail to follow the new laws of their conquerors.

IMPERIAL HYENA

LARGE BEAST (AWAKENED)

AC 14 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 153 (18d10 + 54)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+7	DEX	13	+1	+1	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	14	+2	+5	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4

Senses Passive Perception 15

Languages Imperial

CR 7 (XP 2,900; PB +3)

TRAITS

Pack Tactics. The hyena has Advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the hyena's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally doesn't have the Incapacitated condition.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hyena makes two Claw attacks. It can replace one attack with a Bite attack.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) Piercing damage.

Shoulder Mounted Flamethrower (2/Day). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 14, all creatures and objects in a 30-foot Cone. *Failure:* 21 (6d6) Heat damage. *Success:* Half damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Adrenal Injection (Recharge 5–6). The hyena overcharges its adrenal glands, granting it an extra Bite attack this turn.

REACTIONS

Overwhelm. *Trigger:* The hyena reduces a creature to 0 Hit Points. *Response:* The hyena can move up to half its Speed and make a Claw attack.

IMPERIAL TIGERS

Imperial tigers are amongst the most terrifying creatures engineered by the Crown Dominion. Weighing in at several tons, they combine the intelligence of a human with the instincts of one of Old Earth's greatest predators. Their only drawback is that they need to consume over a hundred pounds of meat ... per day.

IMPERIAL TIGER

LARGE BEAST [AWAKENED]

AC 17 **Initiative** +7 (17)
HP 170 (20d10 + 60)
Speed 50 ft., Climb 30 ft.

	MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE		
STR	24	+7	+7	DEX	18	+4	+7	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	15	+2	+5	WIS	13	+1	+1	CHA	11	+0	+0

Skills Acrobatics +7, Stealth +10
Senses Passive Perception 11
Languages Imperial
CR 8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

TRAITS

Shadow Strike. During its first turn, the tiger has Advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the tiger scores against a surprised creature is a Critical Hit.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tiger makes two attacks, using Claw or Pulse Gun in any combination.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +10, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) Slashing damage.

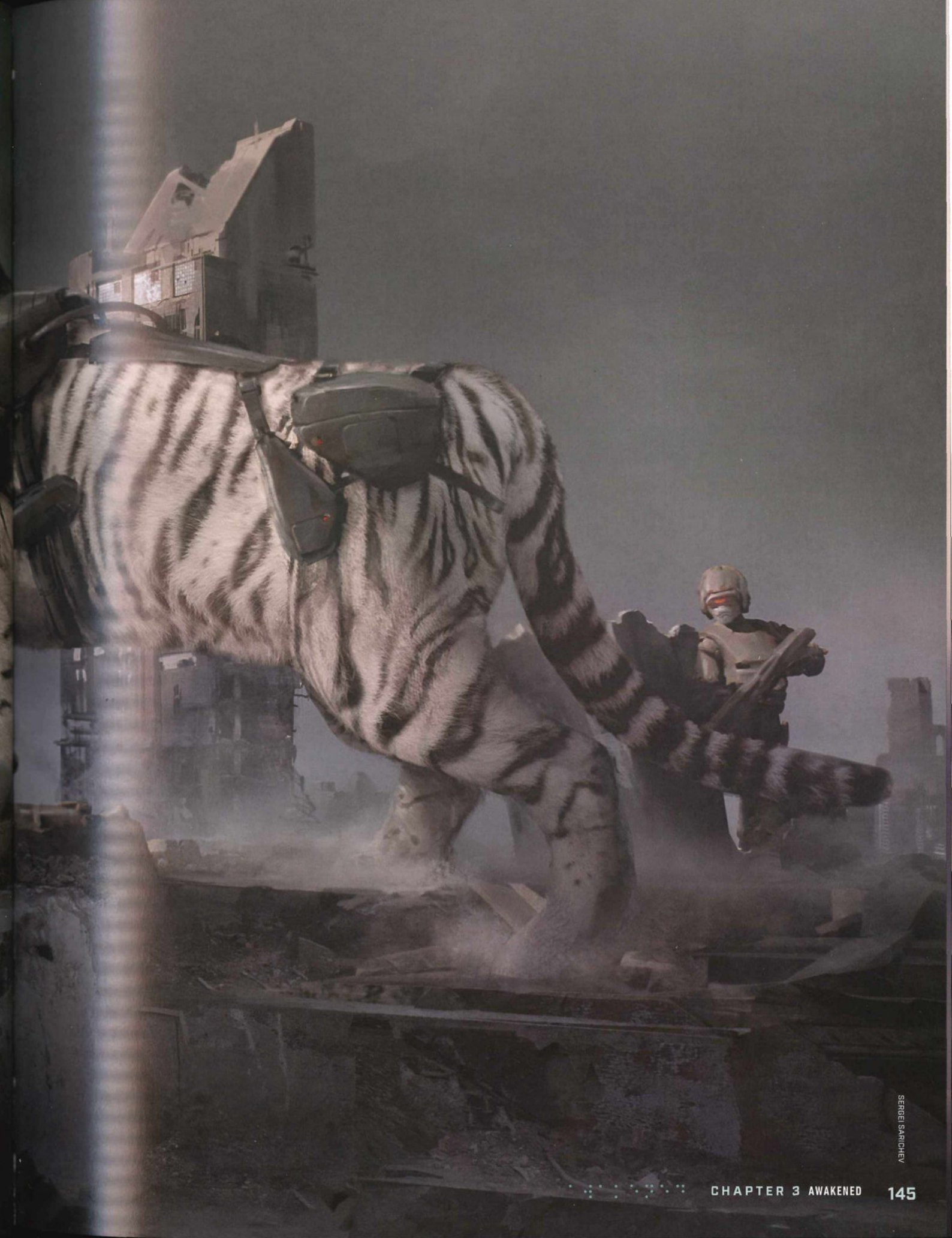
Pulse Gun. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, range 50/100 ft. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) Piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) Electrical damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Lethal Pounce (1/Day). The tiger leaps up to 30 feet in a straight line and makes a Claw attack when it lands. If the attack hits, it deals an extra 18 (4d8) Slashing damage, and the target has the Prone condition.

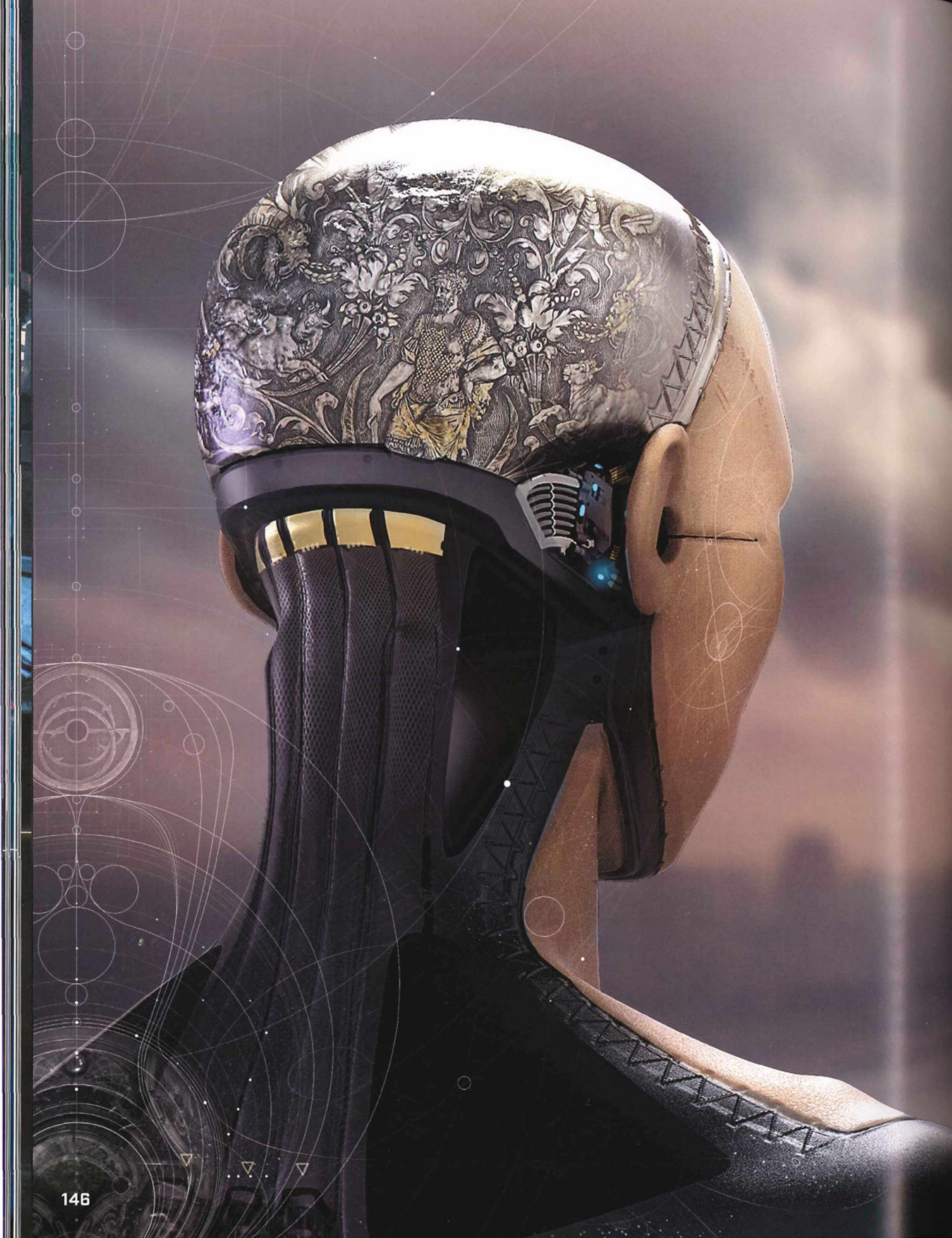
Light Deflector (Recharge 5–6). The tiger bends the light around itself and has the Invisible condition for up to 1 minute. Making an attack ends the Invisible condition.





SERGEI SARICHEV





CONSTRUCTS



ANDROIDS

Efficient and Familiar

CROWN ANDROID

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT

AC 16 (armor plating) **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 117 (18d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3 +6	DEX	16	+3 +6	CON	14	+2 +2
INT	14	+2 +2	WIS	12	+1 +1	CHA	11	+0 +0

Skills Perception +4, Piloting +6

Vulnerabilities Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Imperial, Standard

CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

TRAITS

Adaptable. The android can't be surprised.

Not Alive. The android doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 21. If another creature makes a successful DC 21 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the android, the android is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked android obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked android takes no actions. At the end of each of the android's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

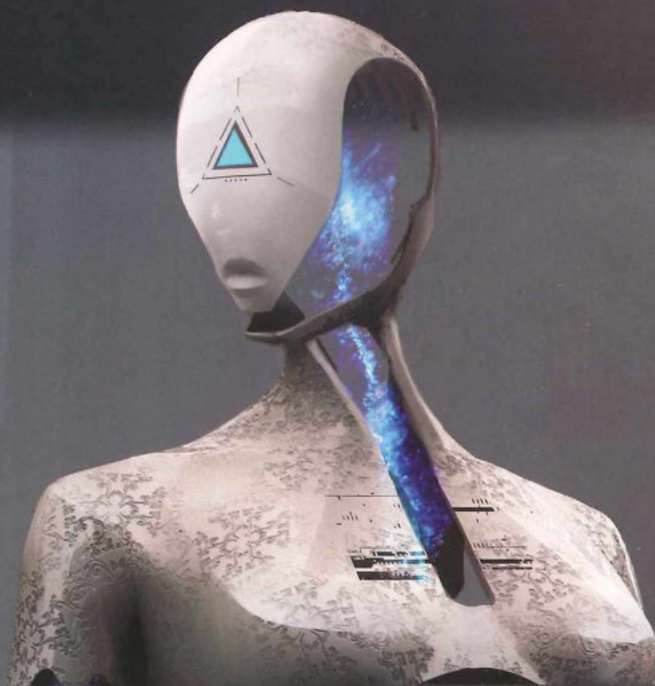
Multiattack. The android makes one Choke attack and two Pistol attacks.

Choke. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it has the Grappled condition (escape DC 14). If the target isn't a Construct, until this grapple ends, the target suffocates (it gains 1 Exhaustion level at the end of each of its turns). The android has two arms, each of which can grapple one target.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, range 50/100 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) Piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Pivot. The android moves up to its Speed without provoking an Opportunity Attack.



»»»» ORIGINALLY CREATED TO REDUCE MISUNDER-

standings between Celestials and the humans they encountered, these androids are now used for a variety of non-military purposes. Extremely light materials are used to fabricate their chassis, and their operating system uses machine learning to constantly improve its task efficiency and accuracy. Since their introduction, androids are now used for economics and trade negotiation, human relations, and menial labor. When an android encounters a situation far beyond the parameters of its programming, it emits an error code and hibernates until the situation is resolved.

CROWN ANDROID

These androids are the same height as Imperial Celestials, which makes them somewhat intimidating. They have a humanoid shape and their head contains all necessary sensory equipment. They have no front and back and their limbs are hyper segmented, resembling ribbed hoses that can flex in any direction. Their hands have a minimum of five fingers and their legs can switch walking direction and walk "forwards" or "backwards" equally. To accommodate this, android feet are oval pads with the "ankle" in the middle.

Although sleek, their segments mark them out as mechanical. They might also be a patchwork, as repairs and replacements are made by recycling components from inoperative models. They come in many colors, though none are bright, and inevitably given their centuries long durability they are often scuffed and dented.

DIPLOMACY ANDROID

Diplomacy androids are designed to appeal to a human sense of aesthetic beauty and grace and are as much works of art as they are communication tools. These androids are programed to adopt human behaviors, expressions, and manners of speech and they operate with surprising charisma as a result. Their humanoid faces replicate even subtle muscle movement around the eyes, giving an illusion of true emotion. Although some humans find their mix of organic and tech parts to be off-putting, diplomacy androids have greatly improved relations between humans and Celestials since their introduction.

DIPLOMACY ANDROID

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT

AC 11 **Initiative** -1 (9)

HP 5 (1d8 + 1)

Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	8	-1	-1	DEX	8	-1	-1	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	12	+1	+3	CHA	16	+3	+5

Skills Persuasion +5

Vulnerabilities Electrical

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages All

CR 1/8 (XP 25; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The android doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 15. If another creature makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the android, the android is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked android obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked android takes no actions. At the end of each of the android's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Punch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +1, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d10 - 1) Bludgeoning damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Emit. *Trigger:* The android takes damage. *Response:* The android emits an electronic signal, inaudible to most creatures but detected by any Construct within 300 feet. **Security Androids** allied with the android, move to investigate the source of the signal. Other Constructs might also investigate.

SECURITY ANDROID

Created from the surplus or recycled components of their diplomacy counterparts, security androids maintain a humanoid appearance with an unnerving absence of human mannerisms. They are commonly found guarding the private homes and corporate offices of wealthy Celestials and are usually

customized to suit their owner's aesthetics. Although they are far from the most advanced security constructs available, these androids' advanced machine learning capabilities and physical resilience make them an apt first line defense against minor threats or attempted thefts. If necessary, they are easily upgraded with weaponry to increase their effectiveness.

SECURITY ANDROID

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT

AC 14 (armor plating) **Initiative** +2 (12)
 HP 22 (4d8 + 4)
 Speed 30 ft.

	MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE		
STR	12	+1	+3	DEX	14	+2	+4	CON	12	+1	+3
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	8	-1	-1

Skills Insight +2, Perception +2

Vulnerabilities Electrical

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Standard

CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The android doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 16. If another creature makes a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the android, the android is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked android obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked android takes no actions. At the end of each of the android's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Punch. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) Bludgeoning damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 50/100 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) Piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Stun (Recharge 4–6). The android diverts power to the stun rod embedded in its palm. The next time it inflicts damage with its Punch attack, the android expends this power, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have the Stunned condition for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.





GHOSTS

Guardians of Forbidden Remnants

ARON SIMS CREATIVE

>>>> MOST CIVILIZED WORLDS

throughout the Cluster are haunted by legions of constructs left over from ancient wars. These automated forces are called "ghosts", and they were mass manufactured by the trillions during the Remnant Era. Their primary purpose was to invade and occupy conquered worlds, while their secondary purpose was to eternally patrol and safeguard important locations. Although they are forged from incredibly advanced technologies relative to human engineering, they look and feel archaic relative to most advanced modern Celestial constructs.

Ghosts aren't fully sentient or self-aware, but they do have personalities and behave like intelligent soldiers in combat. They follow simple orders and answer simple questions and in personal combat, they are quite formidable. They can even adapt their tactics to counter enemy advantages and organize into coordinated squads or even battalions.

Ghosts were so prevalent during the Remnant and Crucible Eras that they are still found just about anywhere in the Cluster. They are built from corrosion-resistant alloys, so they can lie dormant for thousands of years and reactivate with little more than minor software glitches and mechanical stutters. Ghosts are powered by battery cells with an extremely high energy density storage level, so a ghost can run for months or even years between recharges.

The sheer variety of ghost models likely spans tens of thousands, if not millions. However, Travelers have created a naming system to help identify the different types they may encounter. These names classify ghost models based on both their roles and their potential danger level, making it easier for Travelers to anticipate what they're up against.





GHOST BLADE

Celestials designed their fighting constructs for a variety of environments. Whilst fighting in the vacuum of space or across open landscapes best suits troops armed with powerful ranged weapons, a lot of skirmishes in the Remnant Wars took place inside the cramped confines of ships, bunkers, and orbital stations, or in similar cluttered environments lacking good sight lines. In situations like these bladed constructs are a terror. Most units are equipped with multiple rending arms and an overcharged frame capable of closing with their enemy very swiftly.

Their standard programming is notably more aggressive than regular constructs and they show no hesitation when charging into heavily armed opposition, relying on their speed and evasiveness to get them to where they can deploy their bladed claws. As highly specialized soldier constructs, they're a good example of how modular the old Celestial war machines were.

GHOST BLADE

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT (GHOST)

AC 15 (armor plating) **Initiative** +5 (15)

HP 85 (10d8 + 40)

Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	17	+3	+5	DEX	17	+3	+5	CON	18	+4	+4
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Athletics +5

Resistances Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 100 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Ghost

CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The ghost doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 19. If another creature makes a successful DC 19 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the ghost, the ghost is hacked. Each turn, the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked ghost obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked ghost takes no actions. At the end of each of the ghost's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

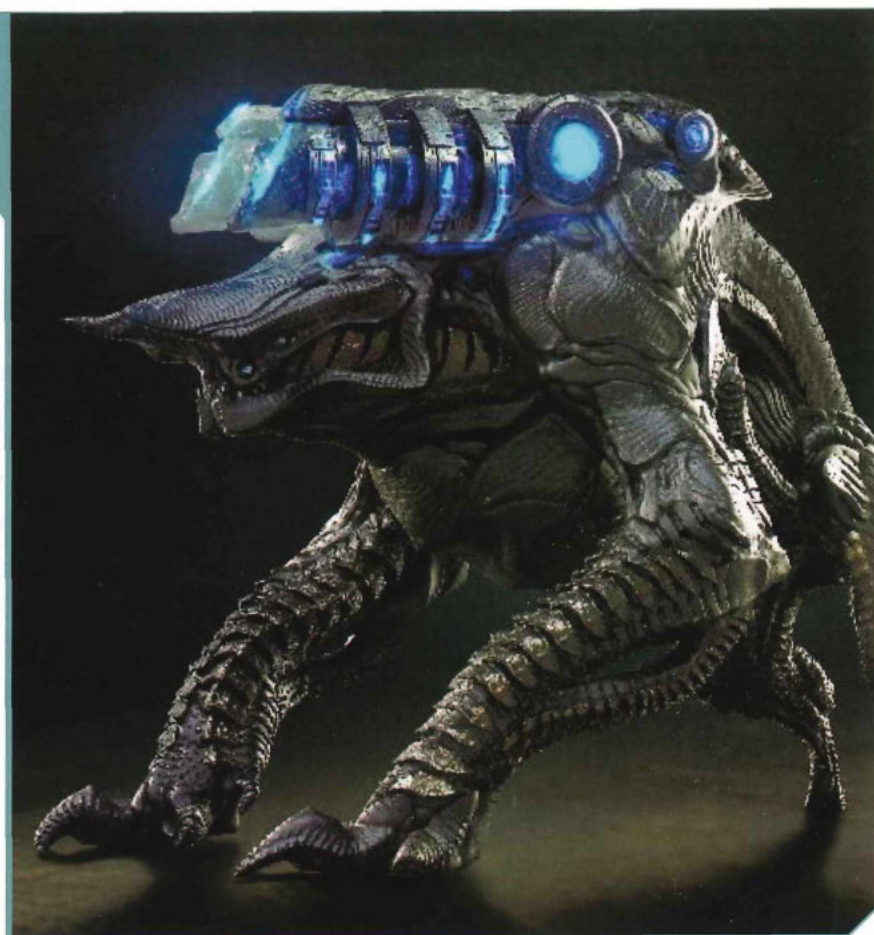
Multiattack. The ghost makes two attacks, using Blade Claws or Burst Pistol in any combination.

Blade Claws. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) Slashing damage.

Burst Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 50/100 ft. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) Piercing damage.

GHOST CREEPER

Built on a heavier frame than standard constructs, the creeper's distinctive hunchbacked silhouette is often the signal for most ruins delvers to pull out. These constructs were presumably designed for open battlefield or space deployment. Like most ghosts they are usually encountered in far closer circumstances, recently woken from storage or else set loose within ancient facilities owing to degeneration of the systems that kept them dormant. The amount of collateral damage a ghost creeper causes when antagonized can result in the destruction of everything that scavengers were hoping to salvage, together with the scavengers themselves.



GHOST CREEPER

LARGE CONSTRUCT (GHOST)

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 85 (10d10 + 30)
Speed 40 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR 16	+3	+5	DEX 16	+3	+5	CON 16	+3	+3
INT 13	+1	+1	WIS 11	+0	+0	CHA 10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +2

Resistances Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 100 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Ghost

CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The ghost doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 19. If another creature makes a successful DC 19 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the ghost, the ghost is hacked. Each turn, the hacker can use a Bonus

Action to make a hacked ghost obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked ghost takes no actions. At the end of each of the ghost's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ghost makes two attacks, using Pummel or Heavy Gun in any combination.

Pummel. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) Bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Gun. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 19 (3d10 + 3) Piercing damage. This attack is made with Advantage if the ghost has used Turret this turn.

Salvo (Must be in Turret Mode, Recharge 6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 14, all creatures and objects in a 20-foot Sphere centered on a location within 100 feet. *Failure:* 33 (6d10) Piercing damage. *Success:* Half damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Turret. The ghost's Speed is reduced to 0 and it automatically fails Dexterity saving throws until the end of its next turn.



GHOST MAW

We assume that these large-scale military constructs originally served a heavy military support role, dominating the Remnant Era battlefields. These days those unlucky enough to encounter a “maw” unit most often finds the constructs tasked to guard key locations in ruined Celestial facilities. They are fiercely territorial, going on an instant offensive against any intruder they detect. Maw constructs come fitted with a range of weapons systems and are heavily armored, capable of retracting into a defensive configuration under heavy fire. Few Traveler teams have the resources or gear to deal with something this aggressive and powerful.

GHOST MAW

HUGE CONSTRUCT (GHOST)

AC 17 (armor plating) **Initiative** +4 (14)
HP 195 (17d12 + 85)
Speed 20 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+8	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	21	+5	+9
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +4

Resistances Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 100 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Ghost

CR 9 (XP 5,000; PB +4)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The ghost doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 24. If another creature makes a successful DC 24 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the ghost, the ghost is hacked. Each turn, the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked ghost obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked ghost takes no actions. At the end of each of the ghost's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ghost makes two Repel attacks or three X-Ray attacks. It can replace one X-Ray attack with an Autocannon attack.

Repel. *Melee Attack Roll:* +8, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) Bludgeoning damage.

X-Ray. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 50/100 ft. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Energy damage. This attack is made with Advantage if the ghost has used Armored Turret this turn.

Autocannon. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 16 (3d10) Piercing damage. This attack is made with Advantage if the ghost has used Armored Turret this turn. If this attack hits, the target has the Suppressed condition until the start of the ghost's next turn.

Plasma Cannon (Must be in Armored Turret Mode, Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 16, Each creature in a 100-foot-long, 5-foot-wide Line originating from the ghost. *Failure:* 32 (5d12) Heat damage plus 32 (5d12) Energy damage. *Success:* Half damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Armored Turret. The ghost adds 2 to its AC, its Speed is reduced to 0, and it automatically fails Dexterity saving throws until the end of its next turn.

The revenant covers a variety of super-heavy combat constructs decked out with built-in weaponry and absolutely dedicated to an aggressive battlefield role. Whilst regular ghost soldiers can theoretically be repurposed to a variety of roles, revenant models are pure attack machines, built on a larger and more heavily armored frame equipped with a range of venting and heat sink mechanisms to process the vast amount of power these constructs generate in action.



AC 15 (armor plating) Initiative +3 (13)
HP 104 (11d10 + 44)
Speed 25 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	17	+3 +6	DEX	17	+3 +3	CON	18	+4 +7
INT	13	+1 +1	WIS	10	+0 +0	CHA	10	+0 +0

Skills Athletics +6

Resistances Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 100 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Ghost

CR 5 (XP 1,800; PB +3)

Not Alive. The ghost doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 20. If another creature makes a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the ghost, the ghost is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked ghost obey a command.

Otherwise, the hacked ghost takes no actions. At the end of each of the ghost's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

Multiattack. The ghost makes two attacks, using Pummel or Rifle in any combination.

Pummel. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) Bludgeoning damage. This attack deals double damage to objects and structures.

Rifle. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, range 200/400 ft. *Hit:* 20 (5d6 + 3) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Electrical damage. If the target is a Construct, it is subjected to the following effect. *Charisma Saving Throw:* DC 15. *Failure:* The target has the Stunned condition until the end of its next turn.

Deflective Armor (Recharge 5–6). *Trigger:* The ghost takes damage. *Response:* The ghost activates redundant armor plating, and adds 2 to its AC and gains Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage until the end of its next turn.

Unlike the soldier, the ghost scout is designed with speed in mind. Heavy mechanical components are kept to a minimum, with nano-plastic plating to protect critical locations. Their limbs are greatly elongated, and their joints provide 270-degree rotation. Copying the design of some predators from Earth, their limbs also have two unique joints, allowing for a greater degree of control and movement. When necessary, the leg joints can straighten and allow the scout to reach a height of almost 10 feet.

AC 15 (armor plating) **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 37 (5d10 + 10)
Speed 40 ft.

	MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE		
STR	15	+2	+4	DEX	17	+3	+3	CON	15	+2	+4
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +4, Perception +2

Resistances Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 100 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Ghost

CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

Not Alive. The ghost doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 16. If another creature makes a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the ghost, the ghost is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked ghost obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked ghost takes no actions. At the end of each of the ghost's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) Bludgeoning damage.

Cold Spray. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 10/20 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) Cold damage.

Bowl (Recharge 5–6). The ghost curls into a ball and launches itself forward up to 60 feet without expending movement. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 12, each creature in a Line up to 60 feet long. *Failure:* 11 (2d10) Bludgeoning damage. *Success:* Half damage.





GHOST SENTRY

Sentries are some of the most common forms of ghost humans encounter, whether dormant in age-old storage or active and following some ancient directive to protect and patrol. Many Celestial vaults, ruins, and installations have active populations of sentries still trying to perform their duties even if the physical parameters of their surroundings have changed over the centuries. Sentries are usually capable of displaying the sort of common sense required of a soldier, taking defensive measures whilst aggressively pursuing whatever objectives have been built into them.

GHOST SENTRY

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT (GHOST)

AC 14 (armor plating) **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 67 (9d8 + 27)
Speed 40 ft.

	MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE				MOD SAVE		
STR	13	+1	+3	DEX	15	+2	+4	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	11	+0	+0	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Electronics +2, Mechanics +4, Perception +2

Resistances Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 100 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Ghost

CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The ghost doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 18. If another creature makes a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the ghost, the ghost is hacked. Each turn, the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked ghost obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked ghost takes no actions. At the end of each of the ghost's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ghost makes two attacks, using Pummel or Energy Blast in any combination.

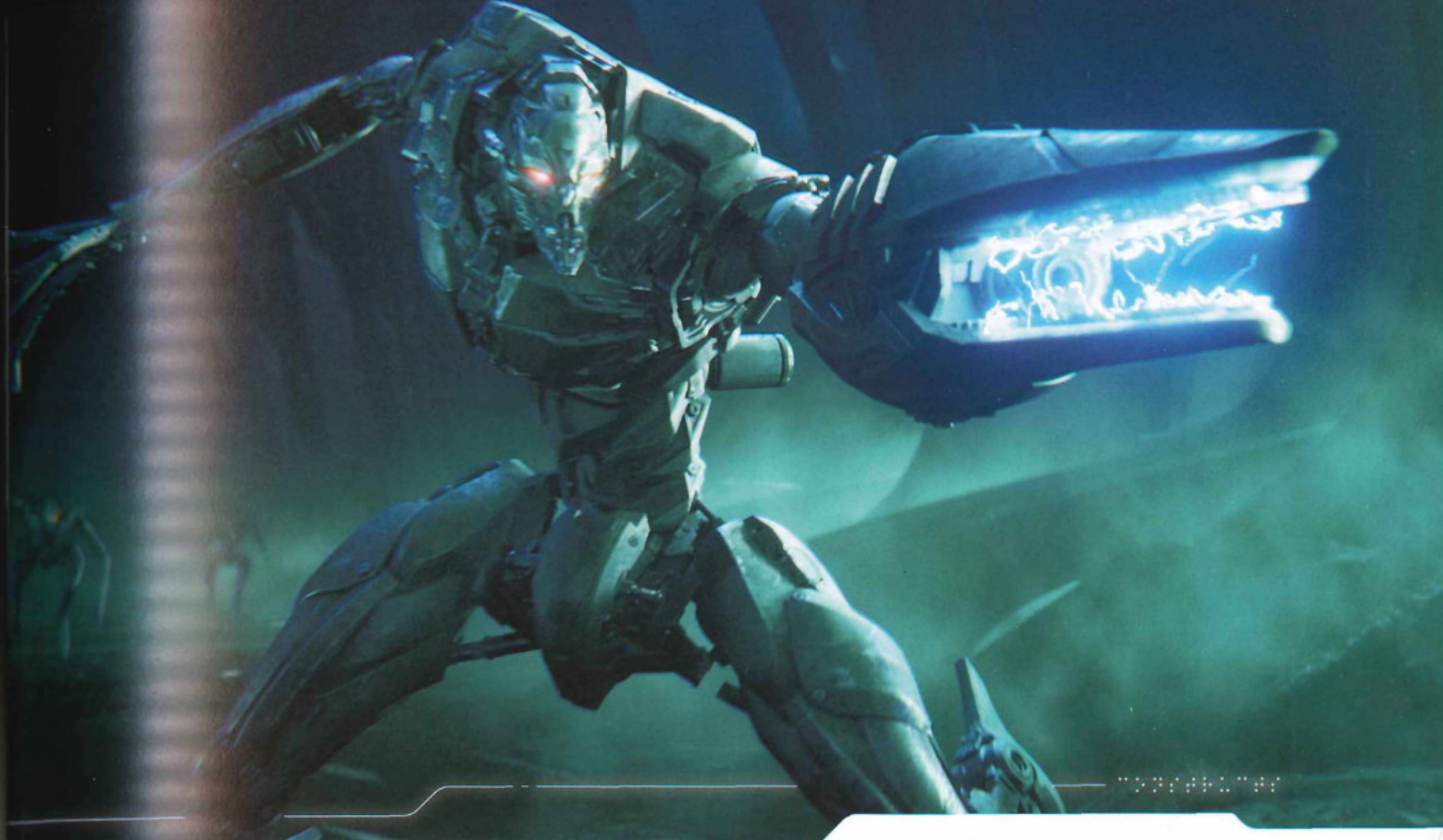
Pummel. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) Bludgeoning damage.

Energy Blast. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 12 (3d6 + 2) Energy damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Repair (3/Day). A creature or object within 5 feet of the ghost that the ghost can see regains 5 (1d10) Hit Points.





GHOST SOLDIER

Various ghost soldiers are found just about anywhere in the Cluster. They were the backbone of many of the armies that fought during the Remnant Era. Most models have multiple redundant operating systems,

allowing them to continue functioning even with the removal of seemingly critical devices. While they were primarily designed for war, they were sometimes repurposed for other roles.

GHOST SOLDIER

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT (GHOST)

AC 15 (armor plating) **Initiative** +2 (12)
 HP 30 (4d8 + 12)
 Speed 20 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	15	+2	+4	DEX	15	+2	+4	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	13	+1	+1	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	11	+0	+0

Skills Perception +2

Resistances Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 100 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages Ghost

CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The ghost doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Resilient. If damage reduces the ghost to 0 Hit Points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 plus the damage taken unless the damage is Electrical or from a Critical Hit. On a successful save, the ghost drops to 1 Hit Point instead.

Tech 15. If another creature makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the ghost, the ghost is hacked. Each turn, the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked ghost obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked ghost takes no actions. At the end of each of the ghost's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Pummel. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) Bludgeoning damage.

Rifle. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 200/300 ft. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) Piercing damage.



GHOST SPECTER

Among the more advanced models of commonly encountered ghost constructs, the specters have come to be particularly feared by those making a living plumbing Celestial ruins. The concern isn't based on raw power, but because the specters are designed to fulfill a sniper role, capable of attacking from hidden positions at extreme range. Specter stealth is high-grade, using inbuilt camouflage, and sensor-baffling to hide their position as they move from point to point and evade enemy targeting.

GHOST SPECTER

LARGE CONSTRUCT (GHOST)

AC 16 (armor plating) **Initiative** +4 (14)
HP 37 (5d10 + 10)
Speed 40 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	12	+1	+1	DEX	18	+4	+6	CON	15	+2	+4
INT	14	+2	+2	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Acrobatics +6, Stealth +8

Resistances Acid

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 100 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Ghost

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The ghost doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 17. If another creature makes a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the ghost, the ghost is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked ghost obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked ghost takes no actions. At the end of each of the ghost's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ghost makes two Strike attacks.

Strike. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (2d6 + 1) Piercing damage.

Snipe. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, range 300/600 ft. *Hit:* 23 (3d12 + 4) Piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) Cold damage.

GHOST TITAN

Towering above human and Celestial alike, the titan was originally designed to serve as a heavily armored troop transport. Due to a glitch in programming, the titan no longer accepts passengers or pilots, and instead functions using its internal AI. Relatively oblivious to their surroundings, rogue titans have been known to simply walk straight through buildings and blockades. Certain titans were also designed to process raw materials, which they intake through a vacuum on the front of their façade. When their internal storage becomes full, a titan halts all movement and carefully unloads the materials from their sides into neat piles.

GHOST TITAN

GARGANTUAN CONSTRUCT (GHOST)

AC 20 Initiative +12 (22)
HP 370 (20d20 + 160)
Speed 20 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	30	+10	+16	DEX	10	+0	+0	CON	27	+8	+14
INT	4	-3	-3	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	8	-1	-1

Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned
Senses Passive Perception 10
Languages None
CR 19 (XP 22,000; PB +6)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The titan doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 25. If another creature makes a successful DC 25 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the titan, the titan is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked titan obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked titan takes no actions. At the end of each of the titan's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

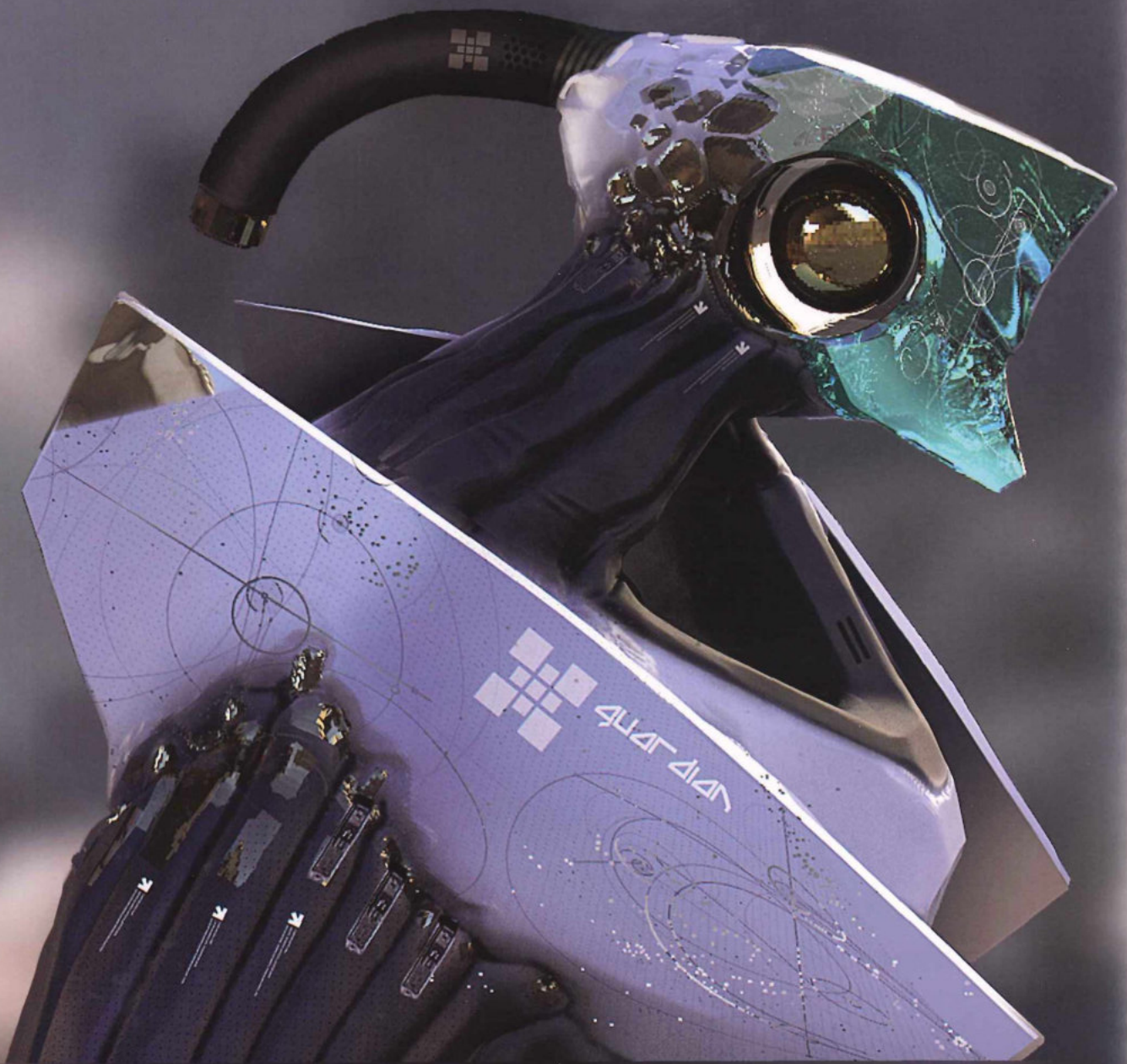
ACTIONS

Multiattack. The titan makes two attacks, using Trunk or Stomp in any combination.

Trunk. *Melee Attack Roll:* +16, reach 20 ft. *Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) Bludgeoning damage.

Stomp. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 24, each creature in a 30-foot-radius Sphere, centered on the titan. *Failure:* 16 (3d10) Bludgeoning damage and the target has the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only. Structures takes double damage from this attack.

Intake Vacuum (Recharge 5–6). *Strength Saving Throw:* DC 24, each creature in a 15-foot Cone. *Failure:* 39 (6d12) Slashing damage and the target is swallowed. A swallowed creature has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, Total Cover against attacks from outside the titan, and it takes 7 (2d6) Acid damage at the start of each of the titan's turns. If the titan takes 50 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the titan must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall Prone in a space within 10 feet of the titan. If the titan dies, a swallowed creature is no longer Restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting with the Prone condition. *Success:* Half damage only.



CONSTRUCTS

MILITARY CONSTRUCTS

Fearless Imperial Soldiers

>>>> THE CONSTRUCTS PRESENTED HERE ARE A

staple in militaries of Celestials that are descended from Imperial stock, such as those of the Ascendancy Dominion. Humans and Travelers might refer to these constructs as ghosts as they are very similar in shape and purpose, but they aren't the same. These Imperial constructs are more beautifully constructed yet no less deadly than a typical ghost unit.

There are several commonly encountered types such as the ubiquitous drone soldier or the Ascendancy predator, known to be a skilled scout and hunter. However, it is the sentinel and mantis that are most feared. The sentinel is an all-purpose construct used to protect important places and people, while the mantis is a war machine used on the front lines of battle.

ASCENDANCY DRONE SOLDIER

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT

AC 16 (armor plating) **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	13	+1	+1	DEX	16	+3	+5	CON	14	+2	+4
INT	12	+1	+1	WIS	8	-1	-1	CHA	8	-1	-1

Skills Athletics +3

Vulnerabilities Electrical

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 9

Languages Imperial, Standard

CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The drone doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 18. If another creature makes a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the drone, the drone is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked drone obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked drone takes no actions. At the end of each of the drone's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drone makes two attacks, using Pummel or Rifle in any combination.

Pummel. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) Bludgeoning damage.

Rifle. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 200/300 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) Piercing damage.



ASCENDANCY PREDATOR

LARGE CONSTRUCT

AC 16 (armor plating) **Initiative** +5 (15)

HP 78 (12d10 + 12)

Speed 40 ft.

		MOD		SAVE			MOD		SAVE			MOD		SAVE
STR	11	+0	+0		DEX	20	+5	+7		CON	12	+1	+1	
INT	14	+2	+4		WIS	8	-1	-1		CHA	8	-1	-1	

Skills Perception +1, Stealth +9

Vulnerabilities Electrical

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Imperial, Standard

CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The predator doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 19. If another creature makes a successful DC 19 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the predator, the predator is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked predator obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked predator takes no actions. At the end of each of the predator's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The predator makes two attacks, using Tendril or Farsight Strike in any combination.

Tendril. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) Slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) Electrical damage.

Farsight Strike. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +7, range 500/1000 ft. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) Energy damage.

ASCENDANCY SENTINEL

LARGE CONSTRUCT

AC 17 (armor plating) **Initiative** +6 (16)
HP 123 (13d10 + 52)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	19	+4	+4	DEX	17	+3	+6	CON	18	+4	+7
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	8	-1	-1

Skills Perception +6

Vulnerabilities Electrical

Immunities Poison; Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 16

Languages Imperial, Standard

CR 7 (XP 2,900; PB +3)

TRAITS

Not Alive. The sentinel doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tech 22. If another creature makes a successful DC 22 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the sentinel, the sentinel is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked sentinel obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked sentinel takes no actions. At the end of each of the sentinel's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sentinel makes two attacks, using Slam or Cannon in any combination.

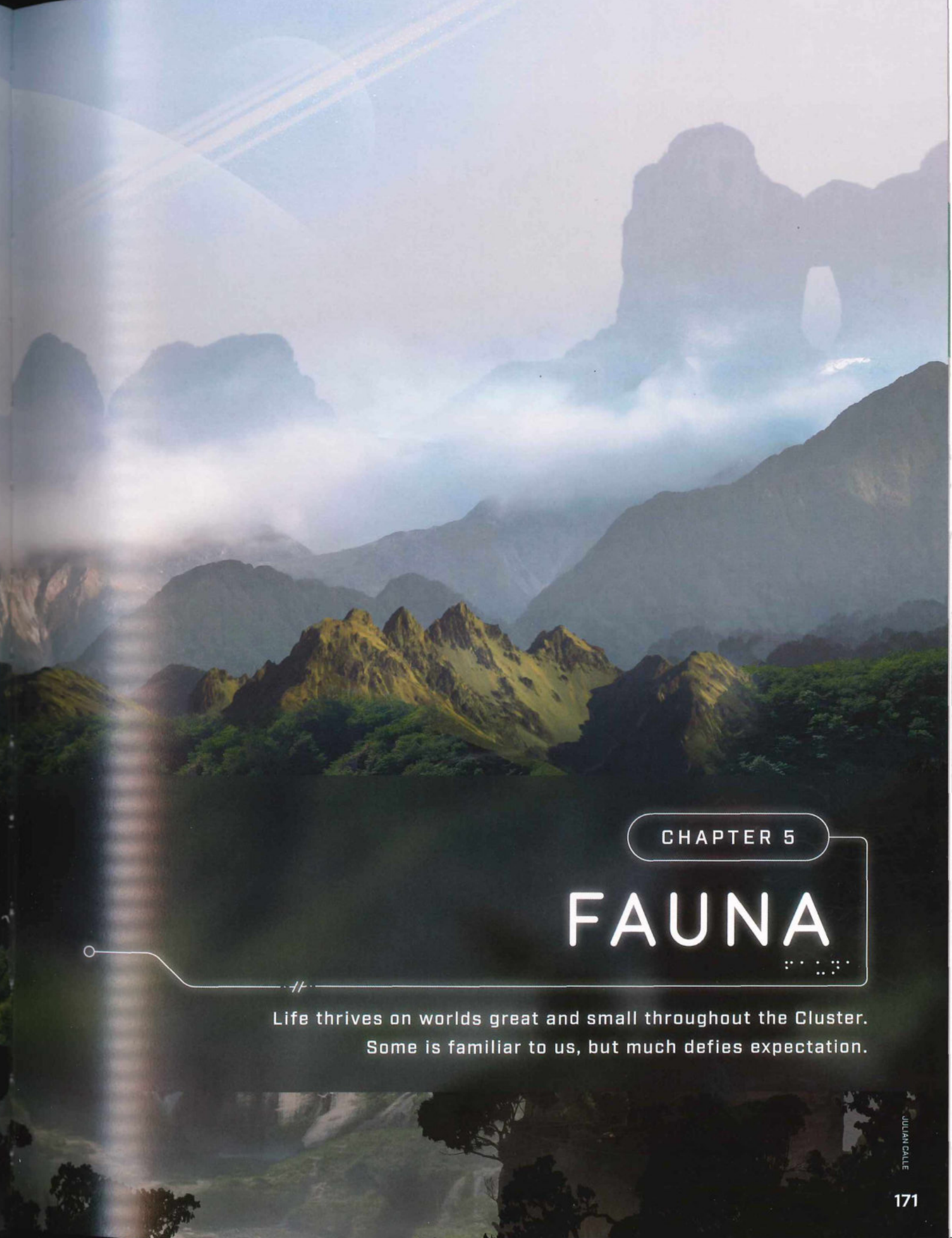
Slam. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) Bludgeoning damage.

Cannon. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) Piercing damage.

Beam (Recharge 5–6). *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, each creature in a 10-foot-wide, 50-foot-long Line originating from the sentinel's location. *Failure:* 36 (8d8) Energy damage. *Success:* Half damage.







CHAPTER 5

FAUNA

FF 00 00

Life thrives on worlds great and small throughout the Cluster.
Some is familiar to us, but much defies expectation.



NON AGGRESSIVE FAUNA

NON AGGRESSIVE FAUNA

The beautiful and the bizarre
can be found everywhere.

AARON SIMS CREATIVE

>>>> **THE CREATURES IN THE SECTION ARE FOUND THROUGH-** out the Cluster and, unlike most of the other creatures found in the *Exodus Encyclopedia*, these Beasts aren't necessarily going to lunge at you upon first sight.

ANTHOZOA'S BEHEMOTH

These graceful bipedal herbivores are a sight of wonder and grow over 60 feet tall. They are relatively rare, given that they reproduce slowly. They can be found grazing the tops of trees in a variety of climates.

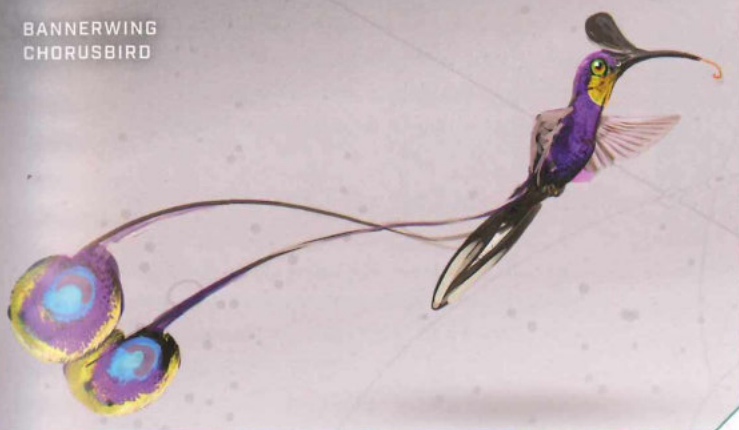
BANNERWING CHORUSBIRD

This is a species of hummingbird with an exceptionally lovely voice. They are a highly sought-after prize for birdwatchers and can be attracted with colorful flower gardens. Male chorusbirds use their spectacular plumage displays to entice potential mates.

BOWER ROACH

This insect grows up to a foot long and is the descendant of feedstock cockroaches brought by colonists. The bower roach has developed a spectacular threat display using vivid colors and eyespots on their hind wings.

BANNERWING
CHORUSBIRD



ALEX RIES

BOWER ROACH



ALEX RIES

CANDLE MANTIS

A small, bizarre crustacean that has evolved out of the water, the candle mantis sprays a continuous stream of bright red fluid from its head. The fluid is extremely corrosive, dissolving bone and metal on contact.

ANTHOZOA'S
BEHEMOTH



BEN LO

CANDLE
MANTIS



BEN LO

CORALBACK



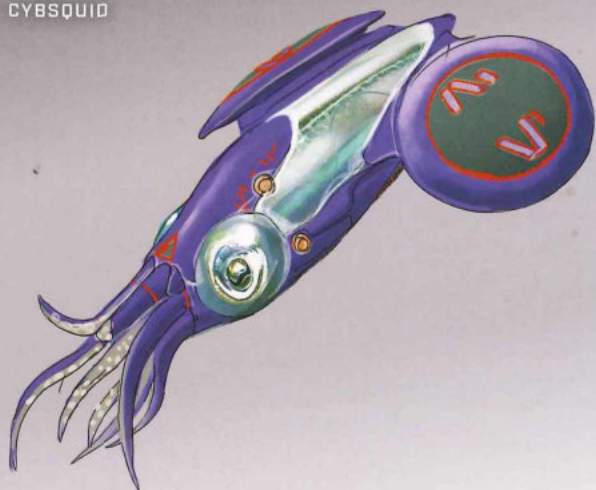
BEN LO

CREEPING SLOTH



ALEX RIES

CYBSQUID



ALEX RIES

CARAKAL



ALEX RIES

CARAKAL

These genetically customized wildcats were brought from Earth as companion animals. They are a domesticated species but still enjoy hunting small animals and bringing the carcasses back to their human owners.

CORALBACK

These grassland creatures grow horns of metal alloy out of their backs. When these horns generate sound waves, they create such immense pressure they can physically push predators away, in addition to shattering ear drums and causing disorientation.

CREEPING SLOTH

The creeping sloth is a six-legged (hexapod) mammal commonly found in arctic forests. Unlike their namesake, they move with alarming speed and are carnivorous. Their two sets of eyes are designed to track prey in low visibility conditions.

CYBSQUID

These hyper-intelligent squid use water-filled exosuits to move around on land. They are talented hunters and problem-solvers but are introverted and prefer to work alone whenever possible.

DEATH'S LANTERN

These oversized larvae lie in wait, buried beneath sand, and use the glowing tips of their horns to lure in prey. When something wanders near, the death's lantern strikes, surging upwards to grasp its victim and then dragging its prize underground with it.

DEATH'S LANTERN



ALEX RIES

DEVILSHAND BUG



ALEX RIES

DEVILSHAND BUG

These fierce insects are commonly found in hot, arid climates. Their bright coloring is a predator deterrent, and their sharp claws pinch and tear. The bite of a devilshand bug is painful but rarely deadly.

EMPEROR ANTLERFLY

Massive, modified versions of Earth antlerflies, these spectacular, if visually menacing, insects have retained their mating season ritual of male combat via eye-measuring dance. Although intimidating, emperor antlerflies are harmless and easily frightened.

FLAYED STONESNAPPER

The sweet-smelling inner flesh of this creature lures in insects and animals. Its flaps then snap shut, trapping its prey. The digestive process is slow, but the flayed stonessnapper remains protected by its hard outer shell.

FLAYED
STONESNAPPER

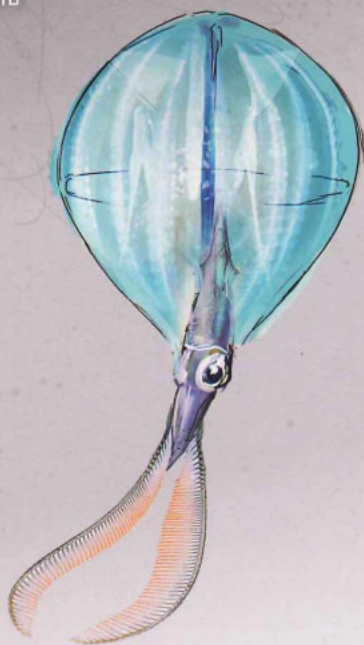
BEN LO

EMPEROR ANTLERFLY



ALEX RIES

FLOATSQUID



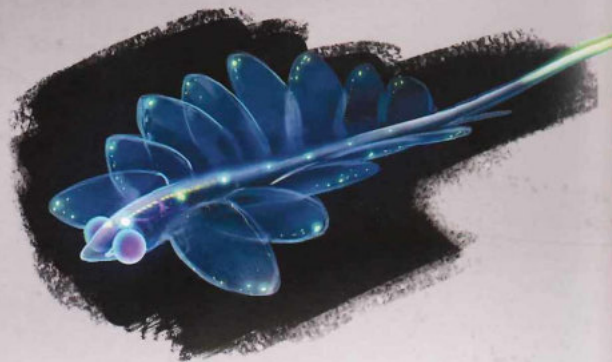
FLOATSQUID

The floatsquid uses a large gas filled float at the top of its head to stay airborne. They are found drifting along humid forest floors, using their long stinging tentacles to feed on insects and other organic matter.

FLYING ROD

The result of a bored scientist, these creatures serve no discernable purpose. The genetic substrate of the flying rod was a scale worm modified for flight and open-air life. These creatures float docily, buoyed by the wind, and absorb microscopic particles to stay alive.

FLYING ROD



GACKAL



GACKAL

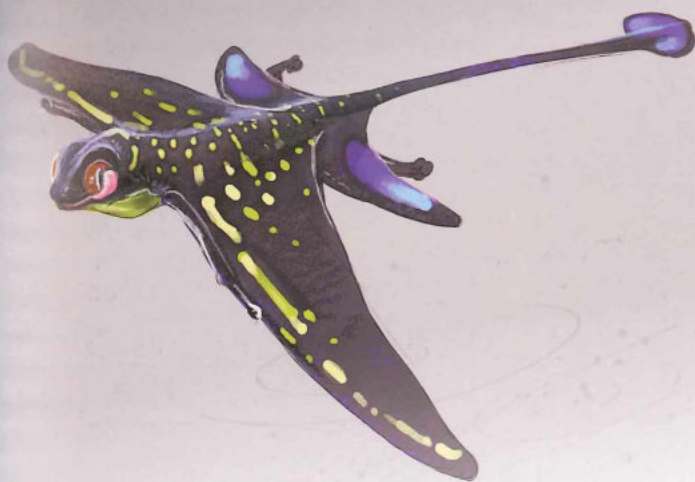
As vicious as they are beautiful, gackal are quadrupedal mammals usually found in humid climates. They are fiercely territorial and can be dangerous if approached without caution. It isn't known how or where the gackal originated, but they are now common in the Cluster.

GARDENER MITE

Based on a genetic substrate taken from mites, these cybernetically enhanced insects use their jaws to plow soil and insert crop seeds from an internal hopper. They also guard crops from other insects.

GARDENER
MITE

GECKOWING



GECKOWING

These colorful flying lizards descended from tropical geckos imported by early colonists. They use their wings to sail from tree to tree and their long, sticky tongues are apt at catching all kinds of tasty bugs and insects.

GHOSTCAP

These rare animals have adapted to life in the wastelands surrounding active volcanoes. They produce a steady stream of butane from their heads, resulting in their striking halo of blue flame.

GREY DEVIL



GREY DEVIL

A massive and aggressive mantispidae insect created to control crop pests, the grey devil is now a major problem in its own right. They have an impressively high adaptability and efforts to develop an effective pesticide remain ongoing.

HARVESTMAN

A shining example of human ingenuity, these enlarged and nonaggressive arachnids plant and tend to crops. This ability was engineered in them by subtle manipulation of the male egg-tending instincts that already existed in terrestrial harvestmen.

HARVESTMAN



GHOSTCAP



HEDRON



HEDRON

This is a strange construct-bio-organism hybrid species with a wide variety of subtypes. Hedron usually appear like solid, stonelike cubes but are actually gelatinous. They absorb, dissolve, and digest anything that comes in contact with their extremely sticky surface.

HEDRON [ARTHROPOD]

Some hedron are more animal-like than others. Hedron arthropods can be found scurrying about in dark, isolated locations such as caves or abandoned station maintenance passageways.

HEDRON
[ARTHROPOD]



HEDRON [CUBIC]

Although slow moving, this hedron could still deal significant damage if allowed to get too close. Fortunately, the majority of hedron are nonaggressive unless seriously provoked.

HEDRON
[CUBIC]



HEXPAW

The hexpaw originated as an engineered pet for wealthy colonists using ferrets as a substrate. They have since developed numerous feral populations in tropical forests near human settlements. Hexpaws are curious and very dexterous with their extra limbs.

HEXPAW



ALEX RIES

LANTERNBUG

This insect was engineered as a light source requiring no electricity. Needing only plants to subsist on, clusters of these bioluminescent insects now grace many public parks and natural areas throughout the Centauri Cluster.

LAPIS FROG

The result of extensive genetic mutation, the lapis frog grows over 6 feet in size and dwells in coral reefs in warm ocean waters. It uses its porous jowl as a net to catch small prey such as krill.

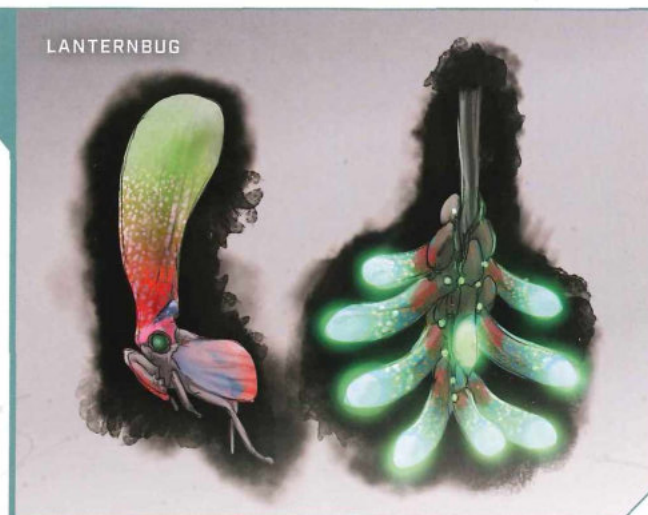
LIGHTHOLDER WORM

This heavily modified invertebrate uses retractable fronds for photosynthesis. However, if the soil around it is weak in proteins and trace elements, it may emerge from its burrow and hunt nearby animals.

LIONSHELLED DEER

Docile and fleetfooted, lionshelled deer are found in prairies and mountain valleys and travel in herds numbering in the hundreds. The herbivore's hard exoskeleton shifts and flexes, protecting vulnerable parts of the body without sacrificing mobility.

LANTERNBUG



ALEX RIES

LAPIS FROG



BEN LO

LIGHTHOLDER WORM



ALEX RIES

LIONSHELLED DEER



BEN LO

MOIRAI

This three-eyed forest dweller's light, gas-filled body allows it to drift and glide among the branches of trees, where it eats insects and plant matter. Although relatively defenseless, moirai contain very little meat and protein, making them unappealing to predators.

NASUTE

These are very large and very dangerous insects engineered from mites. Originally intended to guard crops from pest animals, nasutes fire acidic organic projectiles with stunning force and accuracy. These projectiles burn through cloth and flesh alike.

NEBULA SLUG

These free-floating slugs live on planets and moons with extremely dense atmospheres, propelling themselves slowly through the air using a pulsing motion. They absorb and eat bacteria, small insects, and plant refuse. Many species are bioluminescent and glow in the dark.

PANDA BEAR SLUG

These giant floating creatures use their long, stretchy bodies to move from treetop to treetop where they feed on tiny aerial creatures. When threatened, the panda bear slug can retract its soft body into its tough, multi-plated shell.

MOIRAI



BEN LO

NASUTE



ALEX RIES

PANDA BEAR SLUG



BEN LO

NEBULA SLUG



BEN LO

PARAPHYTE



ALEX RIES

RELIQUIAE



ALEX RIES

RAINBOW
HORNBILL

ALEX RIES

RUMBLER



BEN LO

PARAPHYTE

This parasitic fungus was introduced by human scientists to control pest insects; insects infected by paraphyte climb high branches before dying. Once dead they sprout mushroom-like growths. These growths attract new host insects, and the cycle begins again.

RAINBOW HORNBILL

An attractive, ornamental species developed to adorn the gardens of the wealthy, these birds have since escaped into the wild where they have adapted surprisingly well. Rainbow hornbill are found near shallow lakes and streams, hunting for fish and edible greenery.

RELIQUIAE

These constructs predate most present-day civilizations in the Centauri Cluster and have integrated biological and technological matter in novel ways to adapt to their environments. They are usually nonaggressive with limited cognition, although they have a habit of absorbing unattended technology.

RUMBLER

The rumbler is a peaceful but easily frightened creature. It uses the multiple ears along its chest and shoulders to listen for danger. Rumlbers live in small packs clinging to rocky cliffsides or hiding in caves, from which they venture to scavenge for food.

SAILBAT



ALEX RIES

SAILBAT

Unlike the Earth species they descended from, sailbats aren't nocturnal, although they still prefer low-light environments. The result of a failed attempt at genetically engineered domestication, they are found in dense forests, hunting small birds, mammals, and reptiles. Although they rarely pose a threat to humans, sailbats are vicious predators, tearing into their prey with razor-sharp teeth

SKIDSNAPPER

These creatures are a common woodland sight, adhering to the sides of trees and fallen logs and growing up to 10 feet in size. Their hard outer shells snap shut around prey if the sensitive interior tissue is touched.

SKIDSNAPPER



BEN LO

SLIPSTONE CRAWLER

These creatures might be as small as a child's hand or twice the size of an adult human. They burrow down until only the tops of their stone-like heads are visible. When prey nears, they rapidly unfold into their full predatory form.

SMALLHEADED HAWK

These giant aerial predators grow up to 30 feet in size, and fly and dive at incredible speeds using their three sets of wings. Their striking blue eyes allow them to hunt by detecting ultraviolet radiation.

SLIPSTONE
CRAWLER

ALEX RIES

SMALLHEADED
HAWK

BEN LO

SPECKLEDTHRUST

One of the few insects that have adapted to low and zero-gravity environments, the speckledthrust has developed organic thrusters that allow it to propel itself forward. These insects multiply rapidly and can quickly become a major problem on ships and stations.

STARLING DEER

These nocturnal herd animals and gentle herbivores are built for running. Their lengthy legs and long aerodynamic fins help them dodge and weave with speed and agility in their extremely windy home environment.

SPECKLEDTHRUST



ALEX RIES

STARLING DEER



BEN LO

TUNGFREM



BEN LO

TUNGFREM

This herbivore begins growing a rough outer shell of tungsten ore in adolescence and this shell increases in size throughout the animal's life. The immense weight of tungfrem herds cause small seismic events when they stampede.



HAZARDOUS FAUNA

DANGEROUS FAUNA

Ferocious and fierce monsters
inhabit many worlds.



ANY UNCHARTED WORLD RUNS THE RISK OF introducing one or more of these new and unexpected ... monsters (for lack of a better word). The following sections provide a few such creatures, and the Game Master is encouraged to use these as templates to create their own aggressive wildlife.

CRAWLER

Some believe this creature was created by an early Celestial civilization as an organic weapon to be unleashed upon their enemies. Unlike most lifeforms, crawlers thrive on dead worlds, moons, or asteroids with little to no atmosphere. Their legs are equipped with hooked claws that allow them to cling to any surface and scuttle along quickly in low-gravity environments. They don't breathe, and their rigid exoskeleton surrounds soft, expandable internal organs, allowing them to survive in the vacuum of space despite the lack of atmosphere or pressure.

Crawlers can enter a state of extended hibernation lasting centuries when food or other resources are scarce, allowing them to latch on to asteroids or other orbital debris and float for eons until they come across unsuspecting prey. Only the presence of other lifeforms awakens them from this dormant state and crawlers prefer to hunt by ambushing prey. Acting on instinct, they try to move to a location where potential victims might eventually approach and then burrow beneath the surface where they then wait.

CRAWLER

GARGANTUAN BEAST

AC 17 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 280 (17d20 + 102)
Speed 50 ft., Burrow 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	28	+9	+14	DEX	7	-2	-2	CON	22	+6	+11
INT	3	-4	-4	WIS	8	-1	+4	CHA	4	-3	-3

Skills Stealth +8

Resistances Acid, Cold, Heat, Radiation

Immunities Poison; Exhaustion

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Tremorsense 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

Languages None

CR 15 (XP 13,000; PB +5)

TRAITS

Hardy. The crawler doesn't need to breathe, and it can function normally in a vacuum or similar environment.

Tunneler. The crawler can burrow through solid rock at half its Burrow Speed and leaves a 15-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The crawler makes four Hook attacks or one Bite attack.

Hook. *Melee Attack Roll:* +14, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 13 (1d8 + 9) Piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) Poison damage and the target has the Grappled condition (escape DC 15). The crawler has twelve hooked appendages, each of which can Grapple one target.

Bite. *Melee Attack Roll:* +14, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 9) Piercing damage. The crawler has Advantage on this attack if the target is Grappled.

REACTIONS

Devour. *Trigger:* The crawler hits a creature with a Bite attack. *Response—Strength Saving Throw:* DC 19, the triggering creature. *Failure:* The target is swallowed. A swallowed creature has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, Total Cover against attacks from outside the crawler, and it takes 21 (6d6) Acid damage at the start of each of the crawler's turns. If the crawler takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the crawler must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall Prone in a space within 10 feet of the crawler. If the crawler dies, a swallowed creature is no longer Restrained by it, and it can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting with the Prone condition.



GIANT HEDRON

Translucent, shimmering, geometric blocks of soft organic gel weighing a couple of tons, these strange, non-intelligent constructs were designed by Celestial civilizations for use in sterilizing biolabs and wiping clean attempts at terraforming gone awry. Each hedron contains a small control module capable of directing the gel via electric stimulation; the module can be controlled remotely by voice commands or automated computer systems.

A hedron's controller can command it to assume any geometric shape from pyramids and cubes to more complex hexahedrons and decagons, as well as direct its movements; uncontrolled, the hedron continues following its last command (e.g., moving forward). Encountered "in the wild", a hedron is typically only dangerous in an enclosed space—they don't naturally seek living creatures, but a Traveler cornered by a hedron is in significant danger.

A hedron's surface is sticky and permeable, and anyone getting too close is eventually absorbed into the hedron, where they soon suffocate and die. Eventually they are digested and absorbed by the

CONTROLLING A HEDRON

If a character sharing a space with a **Giant Hedron** succeeds on a DC 19 Intelligence (Electronics) check, the hedron has the *Stunned* condition until the end of its next turn and releases any engulfed creatures into the nearest unoccupied space.

On a failed check, the hedron enters *rampage mode*, becoming immune to future control attempts for 1 hour. Additionally, while in this mode, the hedron searches for creatures to attack.

cube. Projectile weapons inflict little damage on the gel, and even energy weapons have limited utility—hedrons are designed to survive any conditions that might be present in a Celestial laboratory, including extreme heat and cold.

A small number of planets are populated by very large numbers of hedrons dropped from orbit for de-terraforming purposes. These can be extraordinarily dangerous for unprepared Travelers.

GIANT HEDRON

LARGE CONSTRUCT

AC 8 Initiative -3 (7)
HP 126 (12d10 + 60)
Speed 15 ft., Climb 15 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2 +4	DEX	4	-3 -3	CON	20	+5 +5
INT	3	-4 -4	WIS	6	-2 -2	CHA	4	-3 -3

Resistances Acid, Cold, Electrical, Energy, Heat, Poison, Radiation
Immunities Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing; Blinded, Deafened, Dominated, Exhaustion, Frightened, Prone
Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Passive Perception 8
Languages None
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

TRAITS

Control. The hedron takes up its entire space. Other creatures can enter the space, but a creature that does so is subjected to the hedron's Engulf and has Disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures inside the hedron can be seen but have Total Cover. A creature within 5 feet of the hedron can take an action to pull a creature or object out of the hedron. Doing so requires a successful DC 12 Strength check, and the creature making the attempt takes 14 (4d6) Acid damage. The hedron can hold only one Large creature or up to four Medium or smaller creatures inside it at a time.

Transparent. Even when the hedron is in plain sight, it takes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot a hedron that has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter the hedron's space while unaware of the hedron is surprised by the hedron.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. Melee Attack Roll: +4, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 16 (4d6 + 2) Acid damage.

Engulf. The hedron moves up to its Speed and can move through the spaces of Large or smaller creatures and objects without provoking Opportunity Attacks. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 13, each creature or object whose space the hedron enters for the first time during this move. *Failure:* The target is engulfed. While engulfed, a target has Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside the hedron, and when the hedron moves, the engulfed target moves with it. While engulfed, a creature takes 21 (6d6) Acid damage at the start of each of its turns, is suffocating, has the *Restrained* condition, and repeats the save at the end of each of its turns. An engulfed creature that is reduced to 0 Hit Points dissolves. *Success:* The target escapes and enters the nearest unoccupied space.



MIMIC SWARM

A mimic swarm is a biologically engineered creation, evolved from modified “bug libraries” and transformed into a living weapon system. Drawing upon the specialized functions of arthropod species found in these libraries, mimic swarms have become an effective tool for assassination and other covert operations.

Each mimic swarm is composed of a diverse mix of arthropods, including spiders, dragonflies, beetles, mantises, scorpions, and centipedes. Through biological engineering, these creatures have been combined and enhanced to create the perfect camouflage, capable of emitting and reflecting light and generating convincing illusions of inanimate objects—complete with sound and even smell.

When a living creature comes within range, the swarm drops its illusion, breaking apart and flowing around its intended victim. The larger arthropods within the

swarm begin to cut and “consume” the creature, utilizing naturally produced toxins that evolved from their original programming.

Mimic swarms exhibit hive mind behavior, exchanging information constantly by touch, pheromone, sound, and visual signals. The result is a virtual individual, simulated by the interactions of the separate units, and varying with the individuals present. This emergent intelligence and adaptability make the mimic swarm an unpredictable and formidable force.

Mimic swarms were initially engineered to be incapable of reproduction and designed to die off within a few months. This ensured that their Celestial creators wouldn't need to manage them after completing their assigned tasks. However, a design flaw often caused them to mutate within a few weeks, gaining the ability to reproduce. Along with this newfound reproductive capability, mimic swarms developed autonomous thinking and an instinct to survive and to proliferate.

MIMIC SWARM

LARGE SWARM OF TINY BEASTS [AWAKENED]

AC 12 Initiative +2 (12)
HP 127 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 15 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	16	+3	+3
INT	8	-1	-1	WIS	8	-1	-1	CHA	8	-1	-1

Skills Stealth +8

Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing

Immunities Acid, Poison; Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Prone, Restrained, Stunned, Suppressed

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 9

Languages None

CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

TRAITS

False Appearance. If the mimic swarm is motionless at the start of combat, it has Advantage on its Initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the mimic swarm move or act, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check to discern that the mimic swarm is animate.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny-sized creature.

ACTIONS

Stinger. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (3d4 + 4) Piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) Poison damage.

Barrage. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 10/20 ft. *Hit:* 12 (4d4 + 2) Piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) Poison damage.

Engulfing Blight. The mimic swarm moves up to its Speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks. While doing so, it can enter Large or smaller creatures' spaces. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC 15, one creature whose space the mimic swarm enters for the first time during this move. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Slashing damage as the creature is engulfed when the mimic swarm enters the creature's space. The mimic swarm can only engulf one creature at a time. When the engulfed creature moves, the swarm clings to it and moves with the creature. An engulfed creature takes 21 (6d6) Slashing damage at the start of each of the mimic swarm's turns and can try to escape the swarm by taking an action to make a DC 15 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the mimic swarm. *Success:* Half damage, and the target moves to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the mimic swarm. If there is no unoccupied space, the target fails the save instead.

BONUS ACTIONS

Change Appearance. The mimic swarm polymorphs into a Large or smaller object it has seen, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

REACTIONS

Disperse. *Trigger:* The mimic swarm takes damage and has a creature engulfed via Engulfing Blight. *Response:* The mimic swarm takes half the damage, and the engulfed creatures takes half the damage.





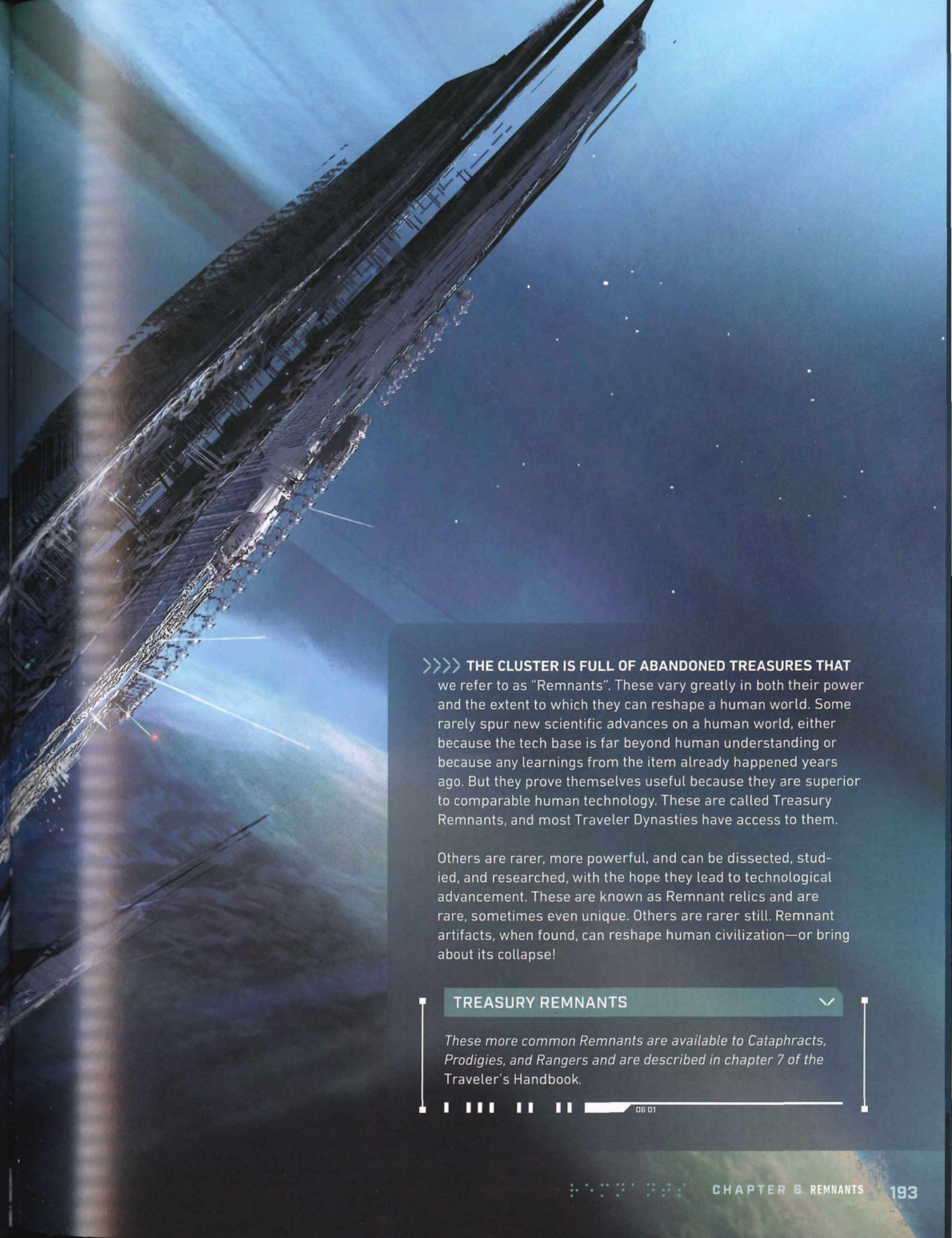
CHAPTER 6

REMNANTS

REMNANTS

The ruins of Celestial empires litter the Cluster with technology more advanced than anything we can yet build ourselves.





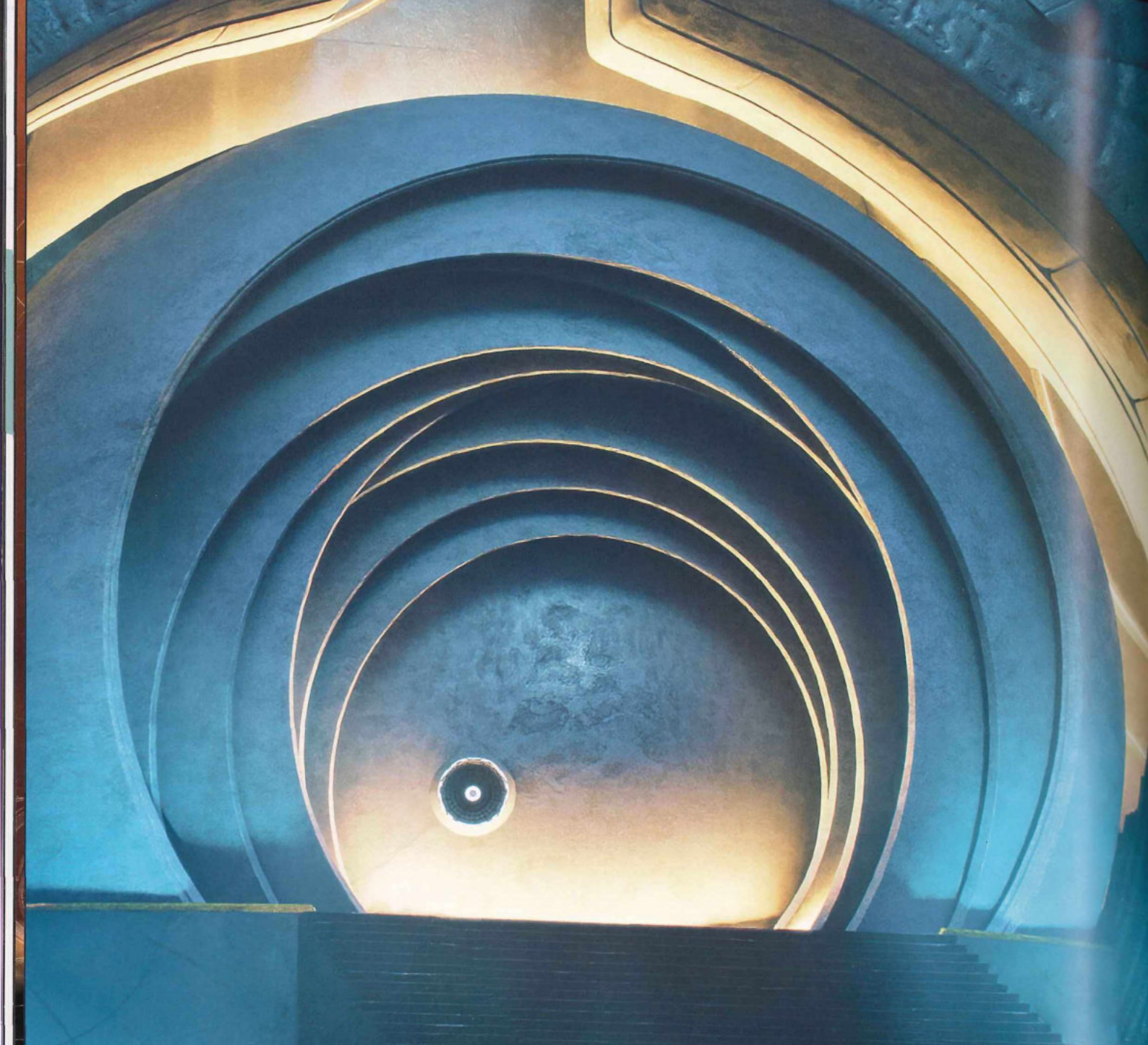
»»» THE CLUSTER IS FULL OF ABANDONED TREASURES THAT we refer to as “Remnants”. These vary greatly in both their power and the extent to which they can reshape a human world. Some rarely spur new scientific advances on a human world, either because the tech base is far beyond human understanding or because any learnings from the item already happened years ago. But they prove themselves useful because they are superior to comparable human technology. These are called Treasury Remnants, and most Traveler Dynasties have access to them.

Others are rarer, more powerful, and can be dissected, studied, and researched, with the hope they lead to technological advancement. These are known as Remnant relics and are rare, sometimes even unique. Others are rarer still. Remnant artifacts, when found, can reshape human civilization—or bring about its collapse!

TREASURY REMNANTS

These more common Remnants are available to Cataphracts, Prodigies, and Rangers and are described in chapter 7 of the Traveler’s Handbook.

06 01



RELIQS

RELICS

Powerful weapons and dangerous tools.

>>>> **RELICS COMPRISE A WIDE VARIETY OF**

Remnants, from battle suits and tools to weapons with minds of their own. What they all share is the advanced technology used to build them.

Sometimes this technology, if reverse-engineered by the savvy Traveler willing to dissect such a powerful item, jumpstarts scientific thinking in a particular field. So, all Travelers end up with the choice of selfishly keeping a powerful relic versus giving it to their homeworld.

And it should be kept in mind that humans can seldom unlock the full potential of every Remnant they find. Yet even a fraction of that potential elevates them. Still, it is worrisome to consider what some of these items might be capable of in the hands of a Celestial.

This section lists the potential technologies each Remnant relic might provide if dissected alongside relevant rules and statistics if the Traveler decides to wield these powerful relics instead. Dissecting Remnants is explained in chapter 10 of the *Traveler's Handbook*.

Relics and artifacts can also be traded to nearby Celestial Dominions for additional Treasury Remnants.

ADVANCED AEGIS

Even Traveler Aegis suits built using Celestial technology can't compare to those crafted by long dead Celestial civilizations. In the following are a few that have been discovered by Travelers over the years. Undoubtedly there are many more waiting for us to discover them.

Ballkind

Aegis Suit (Heavy), Celestial Relic

Control of a *Ballkind* is achieved by touching a white patch on the exterior, which performs a biometric scan. Subsequently, the systems respond solely to your commands until you exit, whereupon it returns to a neutral state, primed for the next user. The interior is occupied by a three-dimensional network of slender silk-rubber threads. To engage the *Ballkind*, you push yourself into the web. Initially, the threads yield, but then they activate, mimicking the movement of lean muscle fibers, drawing you into the sphere's center in a "Vitruvian Man" stance. Air and temperature are controlled by the bodyshell to ensure comfort. You puppeteer the *Ballkind* by moving within the bodyshell and each motion is interpreted by the web strands. The bicep balls also house gold gas thrusters for zero-gee maneuvering, recharging by extracting and liquifying nitrogen from the ship's interior air into integrated tanks. The *Ballkind's* limbs can extend to remarkable lengths, tapering away from the bodyshell.

Benefits. While wearing this suit you have AC 18, and the suit has a preinstalled Sealed (Extreme) augment.

Extend Appendage. You can use an action to extend the length of one arm by 5 feet; this action can be repeated on subsequent turns until your arm is 15 feet long. You can't attack with an elongated arm, but you can perform basic operations with it, including carrying heavy equipment or attempting to make ability checks.

Movement. In low-gee and zero-gee, you have a Fly Speed of 30 feet and full maneuverability.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this item. These must come from the following category:

- Treasury Remnant: Livestone

Possible Technology

- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Metalloceramic (Mechanics)
- Subliminal Primer (Medicine)





Bug Plate

Aegis Suit (Mech), Celestial Relic

Picking up gear that Celestials have crafted for themselves is always something of a gamble. Especially when those Celestials happen to be the Mara Yama. *Bug Plate* suits, however, tend to be relatively safe to wear, just a little disconcerting to witness. One of the big differences between *Bug Plate* and a lot of more sophisticated Celestial armor is that it doesn't work via neural induction. The wearer has no direct control over it. Instead, the plate contains an onboard expert system that does its best to anticipate your needs based on your physical motion, reading minute changes in muscle tension. Trying to second-guess what the *Bug Plate* will do, or to actively make it perform its functions, tends to end up with the plate locking up from conflicting signals. Instead, the experienced user just acts and trusts the plate to work alongside them, throwing out limbs to complement their own actions. A suit of *Bug Plate* is certainly a possible base for a Cataphract's Mech suit. Whilst the baseline functioning is best left alone, there is no reason that other systems can't be built onto it.

Benefits. This *Bug Plate* can replace an Assault Mech's armored suit (see chapter 3 in the *Traveler's Handbook*). While wearing this suit, the Cataphract has an AC bonus of +1, with 5 additional heat sinks, and a preinstalled Climbkit augment (without the Speed penalty).

Laser. This armor includes a built-in Light Laser (Mech Weaponry), which doesn't take up a weapon slot.

Reactive Arm. As a Reaction to an enemy ending its turn within 5 feet of you, you can cause an additional limb to shoot out from the *Bug Plate*, attempting to grasp the enemy. If the target fails a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, they have the Grappled condition.

Rush. As a Bonus Action while wearing this Mech suit, you can take the Dash action (this increases your Heat by +2).

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this item. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Aegis
- Treasury Remnant: Enhancement

Possible Technology

- He3 Daedalus Balloon (Mechanics)
- Space Elevator (Astronautics)

Consumption Armor

Aegis Suit (Mech), Celestial Relic

There are a lot of war toys left over from the Remnant Era. After all, there was a lot of war. On occasion, Celestials did have cause to get their hands dirty and thus required additional protection. Out of a variety of protective measures, *Consumption Armor* is one of the more effective, and less savory. As one might expect, *Consumption Armor* offers its wearer considerable protection and augmented strength, far beyond anything that human technology can furnish a soldier with. To see *Consumption Armor* in battle is to witness a war-god of another age. Like so many Remnant Era war toys, the armor lets nothing stop it or even slow it down. And just like them, there's a reason no sane soldier would willingly take up such a double-edged sword. *Consumption Armor* is programmed to win fights and to keep itself in working order, but not to care about fragile things like the living body of its wearer. If the simple biological limits of its wearer are getting in the way of peak performance, the *Consumption Armor* devours feeble human body parts and replaces them with its own systems.

The harder the armor is pushed, the more of you it consumes.

Benefits. *Consumption Armor* can replace an Assault Mech's armored suit (see chapter 3 in the *Traveler's Handbook*). While wearing this suit, the Cataphract has an AC bonus of +2, with 10 additional heat sinks, and a preinstalled Sealed (Extreme) augment.

Free Attack. You can use a Bonus Action to make one additional attack roll with a weapon of your choice each turn (this attack doesn't generate Heat).

Overdrive Enhancement. You can use your Overdrive Mode feature a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, with expended uses restored when you finish a Long Rest.

Regeneration. At the start of your turn, the Mech regenerates 5 Hit Points, and you regenerate 1 Hit Point, as long as the Mech did not sustain Energy damage in the prior turn.

However, if you roll a 1 when making an attack roll while wearing this armor the *Consumption Armor* consumes a piece of you. You take 3d6 Piercing damage and you can't use your Eject feature until 1 hour has passed after the suit bites you.



Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Enhancement
- Treasury Remnant: Gun

Possible Technology

- Antimatter Solar Farm (Astronautics)
- Evolving Intelligence (Electronics)
- Metalloceramic (Mechanics)
- Space Tower (Astronautics)
- Uranic Gene (Genetics)



Escort

Aegis Suit (Mech), Celestial Relic

Nicknamed “Kingmaker” for the scars these ancient Remnants leave around their user’s heads, it is believed that the *Escort* might be older than the Remnant Era. Certainly, it was developed during an age that predated neural induction. Activation and use of the suit is simple, even for an unmodified human. One simply climbs inside and presses the only button within. A metal band, almost an inch wide, the crown, contracts around the user’s head, at the same time the interior of the suit floods with fluid. This tinted fluid is super oxygenated (SOX). The pain is indescribably intense, and everyone screams, breathing the fluid in. As the SOX chemicals are carried throughout the body, internal functions begin to enter a state of suspension—all except for the brain. To anyone watching through the *Escort* suit’s transparent lid, it appears as though the person within has died screaming and then been frozen, all in a matter of mere seconds. The region of the user’s brain that normally controls the body’s muscles now manages the *Escort*’s subsidiary systems: the “Detail”. These are smaller units which attach to the prime unit: zero-gee maneuvering thruster packs, manipulator arms, heat shielding, hull crawler tracks, weapons, and mission specific tools.

Benefits. The *Escort* can replace a Scout Mech’s armored suit (see chapter 3 in the *Traveler’s Handbook*). While wearing this suit, the Cataphract has an AC bonus of +1, 10 additional Hit Points, one additional weapon slot, and the Sealed (Extreme) augment.

The Detail. This variant of the suit has an additional transportation mode. If you spend 1 minute, you switch the *Escort* between its standard humanoid form and its 4-wheeled all-terrain vehicle mode (Speed: 120 feet). Four allies can ride on the exterior of the *Escort* while in vehicle mode.

Uncomfortable Egress. However, exiting the *Escort* requires 1 minute, and you can’t use your Eject feature while within it. You also have the Poisoned condition for 12 hours after exiting. This condition ends immediately when you reenter the *Escort*.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Enhancement
- Treasury Remnant: Remote

Possible Technology

- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Metalloceramic (Mechanics)
- Pharmaceutical Tattoo (Medicine)
- Subliminal Primer (Medicine)

Flotight

Aegis Suit (Light), Celestial Relic

The *Flotight* is a globe of black gelatinous material very similar in appearance and texture to morphic matter. The size of the globe can vary, but the standard appears to be a size equivalent to an old Earth football. The *Flotight* has a simple activation mechanism, allowing it to be equipped in a matter of seconds.

Once activated, *Flotight* flows over your entire body, covering it seamlessly in a thickness of a mere fraction of an inch. Although the *Flotight* grips your skin and is effectively impermeable, it doesn't restrict movement in any way. The *Flotight* was almost certainly designed for use in the vacuum of space. It provides you with a high level of protection from cosmic and solar radiation. The external surface changes color according to the temperature of the surrounding environment. If close to a star, the portion of the suit facing the radiance turns silver to reflect the infrared radiation. The farther away from a star you drift, the darker the suit becomes to maintain a perfect body temperature. The *Flotight* substance is even capable of absorbing micro impacts from cosmic dust and solar wind particles.

Benefits. Unlike other suits, it can be worn over another Aegis suit. It can also be used on its own, without another suit, but without some separate way to provide oxygen you begin to suffocate immediately. While wearing only this suit you have AC 11 plus your Dexterity modifier.

Environmental Protection. You can use a Bonus Action to activate the *Flotight*. It immediately covers you, including whatever you are wearing (but not holding). While encased by it you are capable of sustained exposure to space, or other harsh environments. You have Immunity to Cold, Heat, and Radiation damage and Resistance to Electrical, Energy, and Sonic damage.



Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Aegis
- Treasury Remnant: Livestone

Possible Technology

- He3 Daedalus Balloon (Mechanics)
- Space Elevator (Astronautics)



Retainer

Aegis Suit (Special), Celestial Relic

A suit of *Retainer* armor, stripped down to its bare essentials, is a skeletal exo-frame, adjustable for a variety of different body-types, from the most attenuated Celestial to a particularly stocky human. A heavy articulated unit forms a skullcap and runs down the spine, housing the formidable computing power that the device relies on. *Retainers* are often built into existing suits of armor, or even Mech suits.

Retainer armor was designed by Celestials who were heading into dangerous situations, and who understood that even the greatest of them might suffer serious setbacks. To these Celestials completing their mission or upholding their duty was more important than their lives. The *Retainer* steps in when the wearer steps out, basically. On loss of consciousness, being drugged, hypnotized, or even killed, the shadowy echo of the user that the armor has constructed steps seamlessly into the driver's seat and picks up where the wearer's conscious mind left off. The armored individual fights on, pilots the vehicle, finishes the repair, whatever the task at hand was, and then tries to get medical assistance for the user, if it's not too late.

Benefits. *Retainers* must be installed in an existing suit of armor (Heavy, Mech, or Medium). Installing it requires 12 hours and a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Mechanics) check. If the check fails, the install process starts over.

Life After Death. Once installed, if you have the Incapacitated, Paralyzed, Stunned, or Unconscious condition (or die), while wearing a suit that contains *Retainer* armor, it takes over. You can continue to take actions on your turn but are limited to one action (a single attack or using your movement). You are inclined to seek medical help (at a specific location or from an individual that you trust to assist you) and continue to make Death Saving Throws as normal, but if you are in the middle of a firefight, you can continue to attack your enemies. Any further damage inflicted to you damages the *Retainer* first (it has 100 Hit Points, regenerates 1 Hit Point at the start of your turn, and if reduced to 0 Hit Points, is permanently destroyed).

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Enhancement
- Treasury Remnant: Remote

Possible Technology

- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Metalloceramic (Mechanics)
- Pharmaceutical Tattoo (Medicine)
- Subliminal Primer (Medicine)

CELESTIAL TOOLS

Some relics have an obvious use: a suit to be worn or a weapon to be pointed at a foe. Others are harder to describe, and humans are often left trying to decipher the original purpose. Many certainly can be used as a weapon, of course (but so then, can a club or rock). We have only unlocked the true secrets to a few of these relics.

What else might be out there for us to find?

Ascetic Clamp

Aegis Augment (Helmet), Celestial Relic

An *Ascetic Clamp* is an advanced device that, when placed on the back of a human victim's neck, greatly reduces their individual desires. The affected wearer, in effect, ceases to want to be happy, and instead becomes very focused on whatever task is placed before them. They become an obsessive worker, entirely capable of performing complex work and exercising rational judgment, but shorn of emotional life and context, even down to a wish for self-preservation. Needless to say, such items have been used in recent times on working populations of humans or Awakened, as a means of increasing workplace efficiency while removing any chance of dissent amongst the workforces. Both Celestial and human taskmasters without moral compunctions have found them useful tools to compel servitude.

Some historians hypothesize that the original Celestial culture that made them had a mindset different enough from human baseline that the clamps were a benefit to them. Possibly they were a culture of wildly erupting emotions and whims, and they used the clamps as a means of self-control, or even recreation—perhaps to have heightened focus and deadened emotion was considered a positive to them, a fascinating experience to be dipped into. Perhaps they were creatures of utter abandon who needed artificial aid to actually accomplish anything practical.

Working from this theory, a counterculture of neuro-engineers has been working to hack the functions of clamps to exploit their “beneficial” side effects. The hyperfocus induced in a clamp wearer can be helpful when working on a project. The problem is that the clamps also tend to remove the individual volition to have a project of one's own. Without outside prompting, clamp-wearers tend not to do anything at all, or become focused on entirely incidental and irrelevant things. However, subordinating the clamp to other devices, or alternatively using a cocktail of medication,

allows the wearer to implant their own instructions that they themselves follow when clamped. Using such measures, it is possible to accomplish a great deal towards a goal in a relatively short time, and the clamped mind often ends up taking unintuitive but effective routes to a goal that wouldn't otherwise be considered. However, anyone experimenting with such a shortcut is recommended to have a buddy on the outside who reminds them to eat and drink, and if need be, turn the thing off. Experimental use of *Ascetic Clamps* has resulted in more than one death.

Benefits. As a Bonus Action, you can activate an *Ascetic Clamp* you are wearing, to enter a focused mode. While in this mode, you complete any ability checks in half the normal time, have Advantage on attack roll and ability checks and if you roll less than 10 on any attack roll or ability check, you are considered to have rolled a 10. However, while in this mode, opponents have Advantage on attack rolls against you. This mode ends at the start of your next turn and can't be activated again for 1 minute.

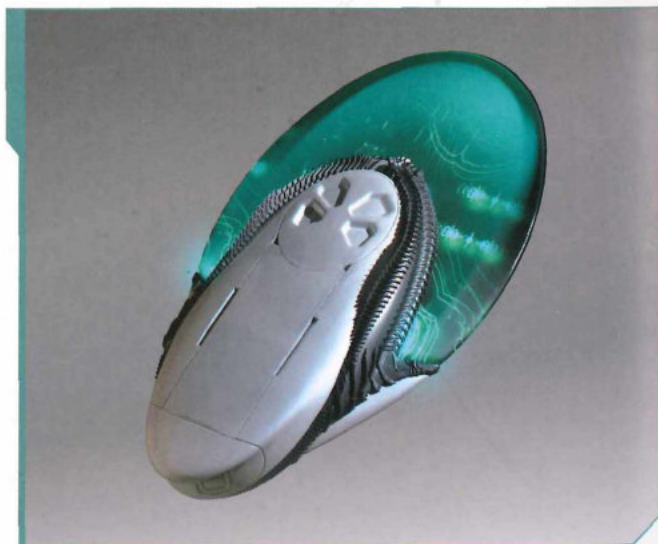
Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

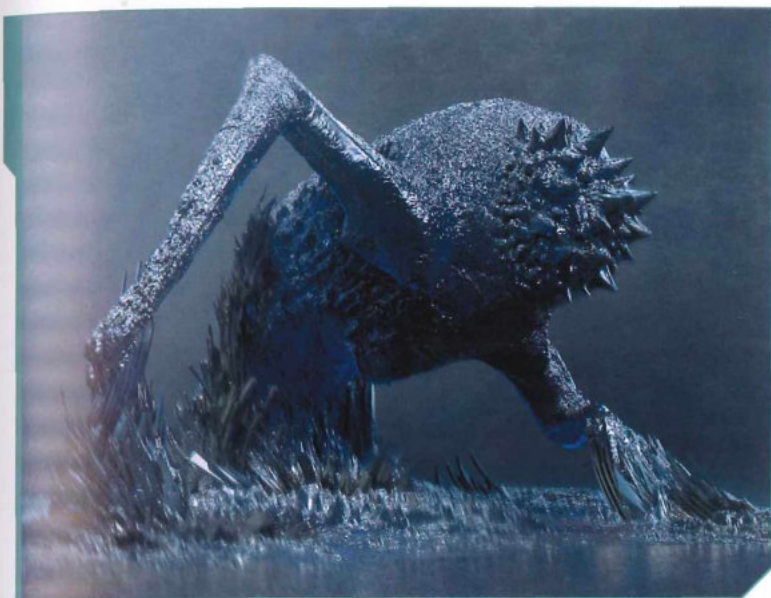
- Treasury Remnant: Caster
- Treasury Remnant: Limestone

Possible Technology

- Evolving Intelligence (Electronics)
- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Subliminal Primer (Medicine)



AARON SIMS CREATIVE



Ghost Familiar

Miscellaneous, Celestial Relic (Prodigy or Ranger)

Also known as a “ghost monkey”, this device is a product of the same civilization that produced *Ghost Gloves* and is controlled by a similar mechanism. *Ghost Familiars* appear as humanoid figures made from limestone, no more than 20 inches tall. Those in their original condition are faceless stone homunculi, fashioned to a creepy, alien aesthetic. Over time many have had their exterior or surface changed, and some are highly ornate, decorated, or carved into the likeness of grotesques. Some are even fashioned to be miniature mirrors to past owners, and a handful have morphing features which change to approximate their current user. When inactive they appear little more than small defunct puppets.

Familiars are controlled by way of an inductive plate worn between the controller’s shoulder blades, and their controller requires a decent level of neural induction ability to link to the Remnant and assume mastery of it. Once they do so, the familiar is bonded to their subconscious mind and serves to act out their wishes—both expressed and suppressed. Most commonly the familiar rides the shoulder of its owner until sent out on errands.

Familiars are generally nimble and dexterous, more than capable of climbing, squeezing through small gaps, and fetching light objects. Many find use in more sinister purposes. Familiars can be found in the hands of thieves, or those assassins who specialize in the application of poison.

Owners who have strong inductive capabilities and a flexible mind can make their familiars complete complex tasks, such as repairs or performance optimizations. In general, any skill the owner possesses, that the small hands of a familiar can accomplish, can be exercised through those hands. Similarly, the physical capabilities of owners tend to transfer over to their familiars, such as acrobatic ability or a penchant for stealth.

The direct command link between owner and familiar extends around 30 feet at most and can’t readily pass through solid matter. However, the familiar has a certain amount of autonomy and can be sent off on simple missions so long as its owner can precisely visualize what the task requires. Over time the familiar’s will decays and, if it can’t accomplish the task within a few hours, it shuts down until its master comes within range of it. This faculty means that the familiar can remain active on a task even after the inductive plate is removed from its owner. Someone with sufficient forethought can even set their familiar up to repatriate the controlling plate to them, should it be confiscated.

Because the link between them is subconscious, the familiar acts and reacts with impressive speed. Although the devices are ineffective in physical combat, they can certainly distract enemies or interfere with incoming attacks. They can also inject venom or pull the triggers of small weapons without any recoil, although as the owner has no way of “sighting” from their vantage point this is seldom very accurate.

Ghost Familiars are frequently modified by successive owners, both decoratively and functionally. They can make use of a variety of devices fixed to them, and familiars with wings, claws, dart-throwers, and analytical instruments have all been seen. For those who can use them, there are few professions that can’t find a use for another pair of little hands.

Familiars are vulnerable to physical damage like any delicate device. Strong electromagnetic fields or weapons disrupt the link between them and their owner, leaving the familiar either inactive or carrying out a remote command without being able to receive any further commands. A skilled engineer can even pair an inactive familiar with a different inductive plate to assume command over it.

The subconscious nature of the mental link does garner some drawbacks. Familiars react to deep-buried desires as well as intentional commands. A familiar’s manner and actions can reveal truths that the owner would prefer remain hidden. Strained friendships, jealousies, and simmering

resentments can result in the familiar taking matters into its own hands, pulling unpleasant pranks or even, should the opportunity arise, taking fatal action against those the owner dislikes. In extreme cases the familiar comes to represent an entirely unsuspected aspect of its owner's personality, haunting rather than serving its owner. The fact that a familiar remains active even after the inductive control is removed means that the owner's subconscious can instruct the familiar to restore the plate so that it can receive more commands—perhaps when the owner is asleep. In this manner, a rogue familiar becomes a nightmarish presence, always scuttling about where it isn't wanted.

Benefits. In combat, the *Ghost Familiar* acts during your turn. As long as you are within 30 feet of your familiar, you can use a Bonus Action to have it take

the Dodge, Help, or Hide action, or any of the actions on its stat block. While you are in range you can also use an action to see and hear what the familiar sees and hears until the start of your next turn. During this time, you have the Blinded and Deafened conditions (regarding your own senses). If the familiar ever drops to 0 Hit Points, it collapses to the ground and requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Mechanics) check and 1 hour of effort to be restored to full capability.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Limestone
- Treasury Remnant: Remotes

Possible Technology

- Limestone: Advanced (Genetics)
- Limestone: Basic (Genetics)

GHOST FAMILIAR

TINY CONSTRUCT

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)

HP 4 (1d4)

Speed 20 ft., Fly 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	5	-3	-3	DEX	16	+3	+5	CON	10	+0	+0
INT	6	-2	-2	WIS	13	+1	+1	CHA	6	-2	-2

Skills Stealth +5

Immunities Poison; Exhaustion, Poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages None

CR 0 (XP 10; PB +2)

TRAITS

Evasion. If the familiar is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the familiar instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Tech 14. If another creature makes a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Electronics) check within 5 feet of the familiar, the familiar is hacked. Each turn the hacker can use a Bonus Action to make a hacked familiar obey a command. Otherwise, the hacked familiar takes no actions. At the end of each of the familiar's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.

ACTIONS

Extra Hands. The familiar can Utilize any simple device you can Utilize.

Remote Ops. The familiar performs a Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom ability check, using your modifiers.



AARON SIMS CREATIVE

Ghost Gloves

Aegis Augment (Gloves), Celestial Relic

Ghost Gloves are a prize find by scavengers. The precise shape and characteristics of a set of *Ghost Gloves* vary according to the needs of the user. Most often they are small and slender, suitable for fine and detailed work. They can also be transformed into heavy limbs suitable for large loads. As the user is the anchor point for any load taken by the limbs, the use of such large limbs without a supportive exoskeleton or powered suit likely leads to severe spinal injury.

Ghost Gloves aren't simply artificial waldos controlled by conscious instructions from the user. The terminal instead links to deeper reaches of the user's mind, so that the action of the arms is swift and natural, anticipating rather than following the user's needs. Depending on circumstances this has a variety of benefits and some serious drawbacks. The arms work as helpmates for most kinds of work, holding tools or conducting fine work for medics, engineers, scientists, and artists. Depending on the specifics of the individual set, they can be capable of physical manipulation at a scale beyond clumsy physical hands or be used to hold dangerous materials.

In a fight, a set of *Ghost Gloves* are used to hold additional weapons ready, assist in the grapple, or get in the way of incoming blows. However, using multiple limbs effectively at the same time is a real test of mental flexibility. Those who have lost arms to the vicissitudes of a Traveler's life can, of course, train *Ghost Gloves* as replacements without difficulty. After sufficient practice, some users incorporate the additional limbs into their proprioceptive image—that part of the mind that keeps track of the body and where each part of it is. Such wielders make wide-ranging use of the *Ghost Gloves*—not just wielding additional weapons striking more blows, but a variety of mundane tasks such as repairing armor or administering healing drugs.

One major drawback to *Ghost Gloves* is inelibly linked to their main advantage. Their intuitive swiftness of action arises from their link to the subconscious brain. Because of



this, they have been known to take action “on their own,” arising from the inner urges of the wearer. This tends to arise in the presence of those they have strong feelings about. Fidgeting, shaking, and insulting gestures are common enough. Where temper and resentment run very high, these can turn into actual physical assault—from minor slaps, spilled drinks, and the like, to full-on shootings and stabbings.

Benefits. While wearing the *Ghost Gloves*, you have Advantage on any Strength or Dexterity checks you make and can carry 2 additional items in your extra hands. In addition, reloading weapons no longer requires an action or Bonus Action. Finally, as a Reaction to being attacked by an opponent within 5 feet, you can add +3 to your AC as you use the *Ghost Gloves* to block the attack. To do so, you must be able to see your attacker.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Enhancement
- Treasury Remnant: Livestone

Possible Technology

- Assembly Glove (Mechanics)
- Livestone: Basic (Genetics)

Livestone Trebuchet

Proficiency (Rifle), Celestial Relic

It is reckoned that these devices were originally construction tools. As weapons, however, they are a peculiar but powerfully effective measure in the right circumstances. A *Livestone Trebuchet* is a blocky item with handles but no appreciable barrel. What it "shoots" is a kernel of electromagnetic force that, in itself, causes no harm whatsoever. What it does do is gather atmospheric particles of livestone along its course.

Any world that has undergone Celestial occupation or engineering has a certain quantity of livestone in its atmosphere. Whilst this would seem unhealthy, the livestone is charged to be repelled by most electromagnetic fields, including those produced by the nervous system. Hence even a relatively high concentration of particles doesn't constitute a health hazard or affect machinery. The field generated by the *Livestone Trebuchet*, however, gathers this invisible particulate matter and compacts it into a projectile. The livestone at the trailing edge of the bullet compacts further until it undergoes an incendiary reaction, so rather than swiftly running out of momentum as it gains mass, the trebuchet shot becomes swifter as it becomes larger, a literal rocket-propelled boulder.

At short range, the trebuchet is of limited effect without an unusually high amount of livestone present. The shots seldom strike

to more effect than a high caliber handgun bullet. With enough accuracy on the part of the shooter, however, the missiles grow and grow and strike distant targets such as vehicles or fortifications with incredible force. Because the shot is self-propelling, the only restrictions on range are visibility and the curvature of the planet.

The limitation of the trebuchet is obvious. The weapons are useless in space, where there is no livestone at all.

Benefits. You can use an action to fire the *Livestone Trebuchet* at any location you can see, no matter the range. Each creature in a 30-foot-radius Sphere centered on the location you choose must make a Dexterity saving throw (this impact sphere spreads around corners). The DC is 12 plus 1 for every 50 feet the trebuchet's projectile flies. A creature takes 10d6 Bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This damage is increased the further the projectile travels; for every 100 feet traveled, add an additional 5d6 Bludgeoning damage, to a total damage maximum of 40d6.

Once fired, the *Livestone Trebuchet* can't be fired again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

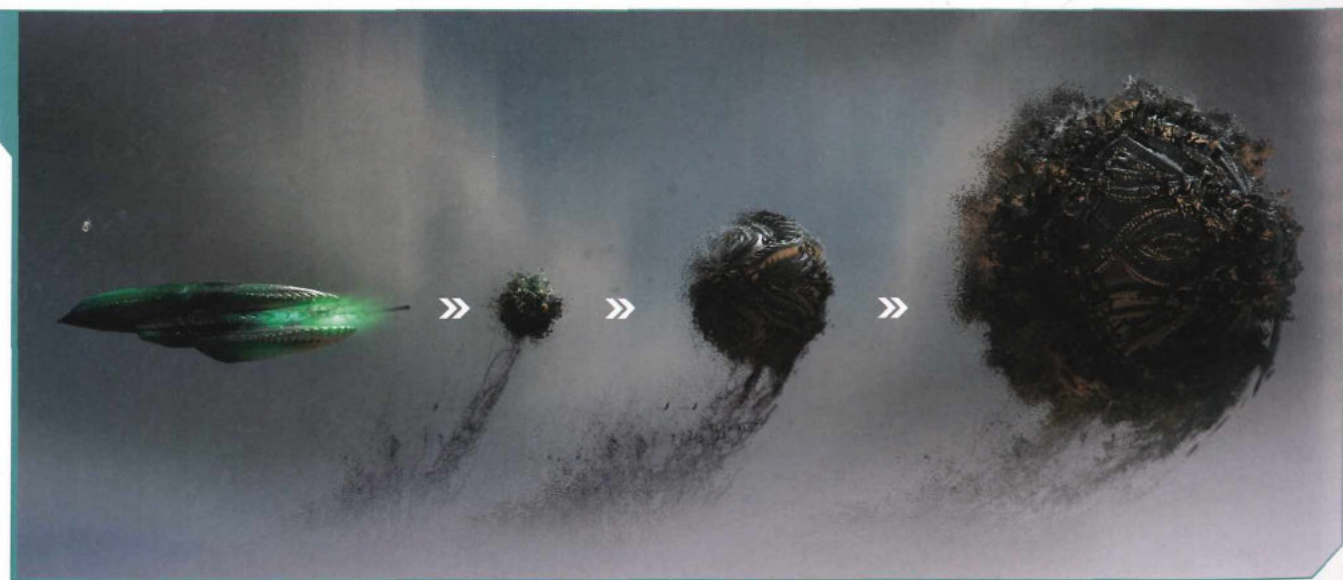
Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Caster
- Treasury Remnant: Gun
- Treasury Remnant: Livestone

Possible Technology

- Celestial Weapons: Special (Mechanics)
- Livestone: Basic (Genetics)



Maestro's Tattoo

Tattoo, Celestial Relic

Maestro's Tattoos have a reputation as being a piece of pure Celestial luxury, and so they remain particularly sought-after prizes amongst scavengers. The tattoo is always found as a diadem, a blue-white multifaceted starburst around 6 inches across. When pressed to flesh it unfurls and grows into the recipient's skin, becoming a beautiful starburst tattoo.

The tagline that most sellers run with, when unloading an unused diadem onto the idle human rich, is that it lets you see the universe like a Celestial does. There is a persistent idea that the great lords and ladies of

the Dominions have engineered themselves to simply experience life ... better. More cynical scavengers suggest that the tattoos were created to cover a shortfall that many Celestials fall prey to as a side effect of their many advantages. Their long, perfect lives are, perhaps, flat and joyless, all the creases ironed out until everything is good, but nothing is spectacular. And so, the tattoos bring a color and wonder to them, that was their human birthright, but that millennia of engineering have robbed them of. The tattoos' true purpose will never be known as the Dominion that originally created them ceased to exist long ago.

Whatever it might do to a Celestial, to a human, a *Maestro's Tattoo* transforms the world. The tattoo interacts with the processing centers of the brain so that beauty is perceived differently—in a more complex, less intuitive way. Art, music, poetry, all now resonate with an additional dimension, a sense of significance and cosmic understanding just out of reach. The taste of food, the touch of a lover, all are given an inhuman and utterly beguiling new dimension. The effect is subtle but pervasive, and quickly becomes addictive.

Prolonged use—and because of the *Maestro Tattoo's* effect, almost all use becomes prolonged—eventually starts to cause psychological effects. The mind becomes stretched in untoward ways by the tattoo's influence, and long-term users frequently suffer from a variety of psychological traumas—bizarre beliefs, loss of self, or delusions of grandeur.

The extra level of sensory interpretation doesn't just work with created art or other small-scale sensation. It can also reinterpret landscapes. A tattoo-user can look over a whole wilderness and discern patterns and pictures. While this can result in a whole lot of blissing out to nature, the user can pick out areas of significance, especially hidden Celestial sites long-overgrown. Other salvagers have found that ancient traps and puzzles leap out to the eye, and even ambushes by ghosts are immediately apparent.

Benefits. You can use an action to trigger the tattoo. When you roll your next D20 Test, you roll with Advantage. If you activate the tattoo again before you finish a Long Rest, you must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of Exhaustion.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Pharmaceutical Tattoo (Genetics or Medicine)





Ocular Wasp

Implant, Celestial Relic

The *Ocular Wasp* comes in two parts. The housing is the part that goes where your eye used to, interfacing with the optic nerve. The actual wasp sits in the housing, appearing as a blank circular mirror that, from the very start, is profoundly disconcerting to face up to. While resting in the housing the wasp functions as an improved broad-spectrum eye capable of seeing into the infrared and ultraviolet spectrums. A marginal improvement on the original but not something most people would be willing to undergo a transplant for. However, the chief function of the wasp is when it detaches from the housing.

An *Ocular Wasp* on the roam sprouts a haze of feathery wings and spindly legs, becoming an agile insect-sized roaming unit whilst broadcasting signals back to the housing, and the user's visual cortex. Controlling and viewing through a wasp takes some practice, with vertigo and motion sickness very common amongst new users. The *Ocular Wasp* has considerable range, a third of a mile under good atmospheric conditions—at least half the wonder of the device is its ability to send high quality data over such distances. When a wasp finds itself cut off from its user it automatically retraces its motions, seeking to re-establish the link.

The primary uses for *Ocular Wasps* include scouting, spying, and surveillance, and those clandestine professionals who specialize in such work have found them reliable tools in their jobs. A flying wasp is nearly silent and can roost in high corners to observe targets

or follow them unobserved. When detected, they are agile and swift, more than capable of escaping most attempts to bring them down. There are also legitimate uses for *Ocular Wasps*. Explorers and salvagers use them for spying out the route ahead, and a skilled engineer benefits from a vantage point inside an otherwise inaccessible device. However, many wasp users are up to no good, which lifestyle tends to come with a modicum of ingenuity.

Benefits. You can use an action to disengage the *Ocular Wasp* from its socket and can use a Bonus Action on each turn to direct its movement—Fly Speed of 60 feet (hover). The wasp has AC 15, 20 Hit Points, and the Invisible condition when not connected to your eye socket. It can't perform any action other than movement, but you see everything your wasp sees, while it remains within 1,500 feet of you.

While the *Ocular Wasp* is disengaged you can use an action to make one indirect or ricochet styled ranged weapon attack against a target within range of your weapon that your wasp can see. You ignore any cover benefits the target has, but the attack is made with Disadvantage if the range is more than 30 feet away. After the wasp returns to you, you can use an action to reconnect the wasp to your socket.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Caster
- Treasury Remnant: Projector

Possible Technology

- Celestial Augment (Mechanics)
- Celestial Gear (Mechanics)
- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Subliminal Primer (Medicine)





Shadow Pack

Awakened Gear, Celestial Relic (Ranger)

The Awakened came with humans all the way from Earth. They live and work alongside people just about everywhere they go. And yet for the most part, Celestial tech has little to give them. The arrangement between Celestials and Changelings is different. Not only in that the master-servant hierarchy is far more rigidly established, but in that Changelings tend to have a lot of human DNA in their makeup. When Celestials make devices for their servants to use, those devices are usually suitable for human hands too. However, some Celestials have animal pets and companions of their own, although still within that uncompromising hierarchy that places the Celestials at the top. And sometimes, these Celestials make special toys for these pets.

One such is a *Shadow Pack*, a complex device of many parts. Its core is a harness that straps about the body of the Beast in question and is readily alterable to fit new wearers. The harness is designed to read the movements and attitudes of the wearer and interpret its intentions and desires. The rest of the pack comprises a handful of floating drones equipped with powerful electromagnetic fields, and a lot of sharp pieces of metal. When active, each drone receives data from the harness and projects a field in the shape of the parent animal. Metal shards spring into place within the field until what is created is a kind of shadow puppet Beast made from razor-edged pieces, flattened and stylized, but moving in complimentary mimicry alongside the original. Human Rangers quickly found that *Shadow Packs* could be worn by and attuned to their Awakened Companions. Thus equipped, a single Awakened becomes a whole fighting squad on its own.

Benefits. If you possess an Awakened Companion and you attach this device to them, then you can use a Bonus Action to conjure (or dismiss) the *Shadow Pack*.

Fighting Pack. When the Awakened Companion makes an attack, the *Shadow Pack* also makes one attack. It has all the same melee attacks as the source Awakened, though it inflicts only the Slashing, Piercing, or Bludgeoning component of the attacks' damage. The *Shadow Pack* also responds to commands you make using your Commander feature.

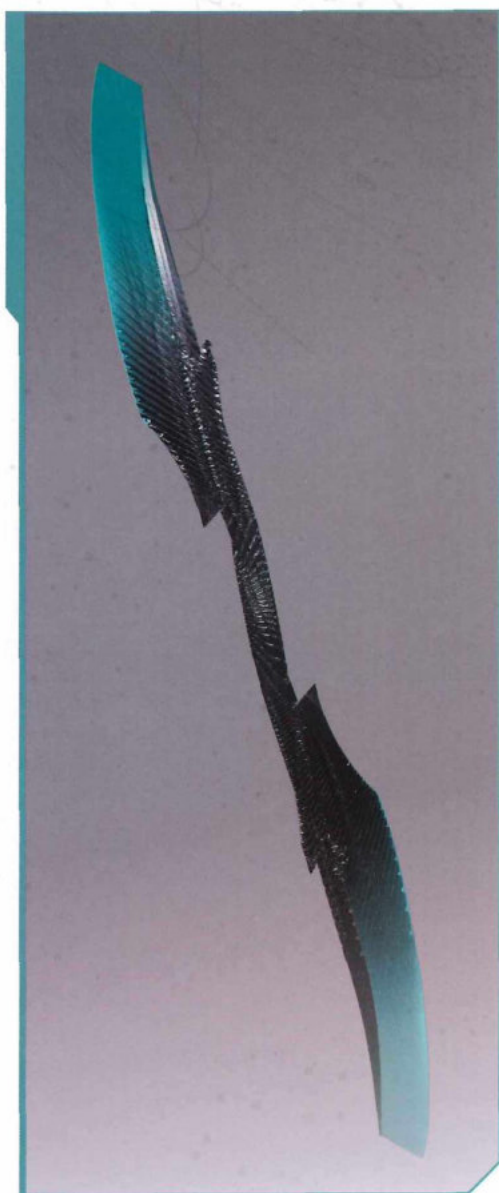
Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you a Treasury Remnant in exchange for this relic. This must come from the following category:

- Treasury Remnant: Aegis

Possible Technology

- Metalloceramic (Mechanics)
- Reaction Mass Tank: He3 (Mechanics)
- Space Elevator (Astronautics)
- Uranic Gene (Genetics)



Surgeon's Mate

Proficiency (Blade), Celestial Relic

The *Surgeon's Mate* is a handheld medical tool that projects a shimmering electromagnetic field that can be configured with extreme precision to cut desired tissues or materials, and pass through others without affecting them. To use the *Surgeon's Mate* for its proper purpose, its owner must simultaneously have medical knowledge, a steady hand, and considerable practice with the device's settings. Under these conditions, complex surgical operations are enacted without breaching the patient's skin—or even clothes.

Several *Surgeon's Mates* have found their way into the toolkits of engineers and saboteurs as, suitably configured, the devices are used to make precision cuts within a device without needing to open it up. Or, alternatively, to open up whatever needs working on, as the cutting field is effective against even very tough inorganic materials when properly configured.

Used as a weapon, however, the *Surgeon's Mate* requires considerably less finesse. It's still entirely possible to get the settings wrong, so that the cutting field passes through flesh and armor without causing any harm, or even gets "stuck" in thin air as it tries to chew on nothing. However, on the general principle that destruction is always easier than healing, configuring a *Surgeon's Mate* as a particularly nasty weapon is far easier than employing it properly.

The most common setting that an assassin might choose is simply to have the blade find purchase in organic material but not in inorganics. In such a way a killer can stab through heavy armor without interacting with it but make a nasty mess of anything living underneath. Most *Surgeon's Mates* can project a blade of around 12 inches when used in such a manner.

Because the *Surgeon's Mate* effectiveness is based on the flexibility of its design, an ingenious user with fine induction control can improvise other uses for the device, with considerable trial, error, and practice. Configuring the field to interact in specific ways with unusual particles might allow technical interaction within the radioactive core of a reactor, for example. Extremely precise use could even make invisible alterations to the data held within certain types of storage, although the amount of work required to effect such a change would likely be far beyond the effect.

Benefits. You can use an action to activate the *Surgeon's Mate* and make a melee attack against an opponent within 5 feet. You add your Dexterity modifier to the attack roll (you also add your Proficiency Bonus if you are proficient with Blades). For purposes of calculating the target's Armor Class, any armor worn by them is ignored. On a successful hit, the target takes 6d8 Energy damage.

Additionally, whenever you attempt a Wisdom (Mechanics) check using the *Surgeon's Mate* as a tool to disassemble an object, the DC for the check becomes 10, no matter what its original DC was.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Cellular Reincarnation (Medicine)
- Celestial Weaponry: Special (Mechanics)
- Reconstructive Foundry (Mechanics)
- Silicate Mining (Genetics)

Warp Field Generator

Aegis Augment (Gloves), Celestial Relic

There is considerable debate over the utility of these devices as a protective measure. However, they are surely uncontested as the most misleadingly named Remnant device in regular circulation. They don't, in fact, generate a "warp field", whatever that even might be. Projectiles fired at the user aren't safely "warped" away. The fact that plenty of people believe such nonsense has caused a considerable number of collateral deaths.

This generator actually is a bulky piece of kit comprised of components found in large Celestial engines that proved simple enough for ready repurposing by human engineers. These generators are found amongst desperados and chancers across human habitats in the Cluster. Worn on the person, it resembles a series of inner tubes about the body, making any kind of swift action difficult. Charged up, these tubes generally glow with an unhealthy light, although thankfully without producing an equivalent heat which would surely roast the wearer.

When powered up, what the generator actually generates is a powerful electromagnetic field in the space immediately around the user, projecting out perhaps seven to twelve inches. Any projectile, energy beam, or just about anything else intruding on the field is deflected away from the wearer, often at an enhanced velocity. The protective field is extremely effective, within its own precise limitations.

The major drawback is that using a *Warp Field Generator* as armor is profoundly antisocial to one's allies. There is no way of calibrating the field to deflect in any particular direction, and so standing anywhere near the user of such a device adds a whole extra set of things to get

shot by as the field slews bullets and beams at random in all directions. Where multiple users deploy fields at the same time the entire area can become a deadly crossfire of constantly redeflected and accelerated projectiles—until someone's generator runs out of power.

The limited reach of the field also exposes some limitations. Whilst this allows the user to reach past its effect to deploy their own weapons, any such extended limbs are also unprotected and vulnerable to incoming fire, something that many users have forgotten in the heat of battle. The fields have also been known to shut down other electronic devices if not properly placed and calibrated, including implanted cybernetics and, in some unfortunate cases, vital medical systems. Such is the cost of improvising new uses for old Celestial technology.

Benefits. As a Reaction to being hit with a ranged attack, you use the generator to deflect the attack, taking half damage only. However, you, and every creature within 30 feet of you, must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw (you make your save with Advantage). The creature that fails the saving throw with the lowest roll takes half of the damage originally intended for you. If all creatures succeed on their saving throws, none take any damage as the projectiles are safely deflected into walls, ceilings, or otherwise away from you.

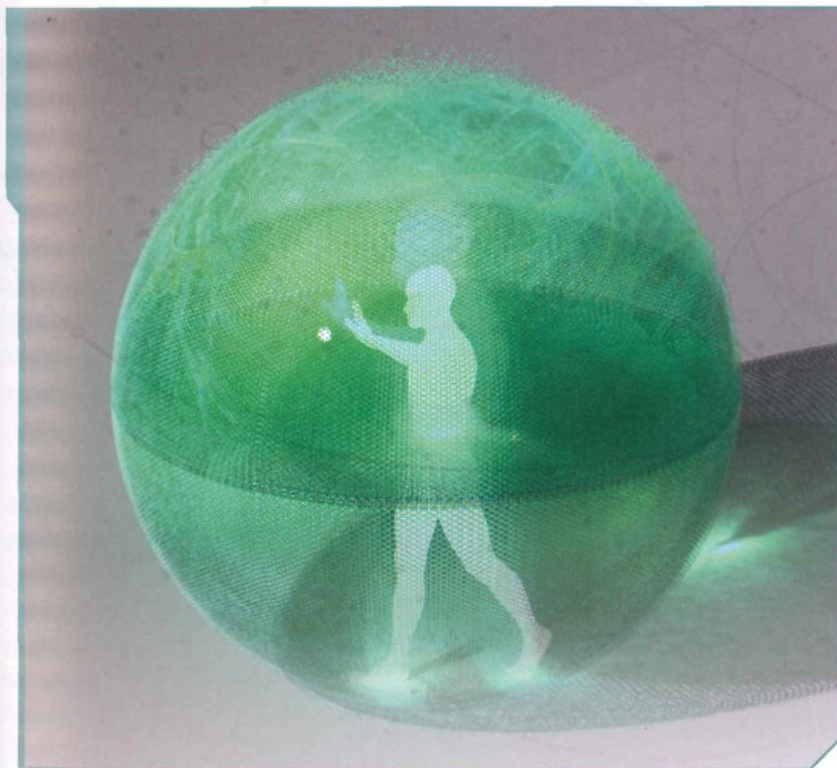
Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

- Treasury Remnant: Aegis
- Treasury Remnant: Enhancement

Possible Technology

- Reclaimer (Astronautics)
- Reconstructive Foundry (Mechanics)
- Tokamak Reactor (Mechanics)



MORTAL GIFTS



The class of Remnant known as “Mortal Gifts” raises more questions than other relics. And they are weapons. None of that, “Maybe it was a tool that just happens to have a destructive use.” Mortal Gifts are personal-scale implements designed solely and specifically for killing, and we know that because, one way or another, they tell you. The big question they raise, however, isn’t why some lost Celestial culture built them, but why cultures kept building them, over centuries and millennia.

We’ve encountered many of these relics now. Each unique, in style, operation, and technological function. Each very definitely an iteration on an idea that arose over and over amongst disparate Celestial cultures. Almost as if there was something else out there, putting the thought into their heads. Some fringe academics suggest that some truly ancient Celestial culture—even the Elohim themselves—conceived of a weapon so perfect that the very idea somehow perpetuated itself through the Cluster, an ur-weapon seeking receptive minds that would clothe it in metal and plastic and make it real.

Every Mortal Gift looks different. The majority are guns, although there are a handful of swords and similar close-combat weapons included amongst the class. Many examples are familiar to collectors and dealers, who do their best to track the current owners. All they need to do is wait. Every Mortal Gift racks up a tally of bodies and each owner becomes their own last victim. The common characteristic of all these weapons is that the implement itself takes part in the act of killing and interfaces with the mind of its wielder. For a gun, it might nudge the arms to correct for atmospheric conditions, or more exactly strike a critical point in the target’s armor. A sword might adjust a fencer’s form to evade parries and strike true.

More than this, though, Mortal Gifts want to be used. An owner who keeps them slung or sheathed is useless to them. To own one is to share your mind with a voice—at first a mere subconscious tweaking, then a companion, then a whole world of delusion filtered through the lens of a rifle’s scope. When you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail, the saying goes. When you have a Mortal Gift, everything looks like a target.





Bloody Lisa

Proficiency (Blade), Celestial Relic

The “Bloody Lisa” is a Blade, formed of a single piece of high-durability ceramic that looks unpleasantly like bone. Self-sharpening, perfectly balanced, far too light for its length, to wield this weapon is a fencer’s dream. The blade contains field generators that lift and guide the blade, and the sword interfaces with its user to perfect their form sufficient to make blade-masters weep. The same internal fields also extend the cutting edge by around three inches in every direction, meaning the blade scores a hit even on an ostensible near-miss.

All it demands in return for these gifts is the user’s sanity. *Bloody Lisa* drives its users into adrenal overdrive, flooding their systems with hormones geared towards fighting and violence. A brief exchange of blows might see no more than a heightened heartbeat and an uncharacteristic snarl of aggression but sustained use of the blade drives the wielder towards an uncontrollable berserk fury that doesn’t distinguish between friend or foe and continues until there are no viable targets. In this frenzy the wielder feels no pain and the sword takes over their autonomic functions to pinch shut severed blood vessels and cancel out shock. Wielders can certainly be killed by sufficient mechanical damage, but they don’t

bleed or slow down and continue fighting even with broken limbs as their muscles clamp on the fractured bones to hold them in place. In fact, death by massive trauma can be the only way of dealing with a wielder who has gone too far.

Benefits. The *Bloody Lisa* functions as a melee weapon with a reach of 10 feet. It grants a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with it and deals 3d10 Slashing damage on a hit, and 3 Slashing damage on a miss. Attack rolls made with the *Bloody Lisa* have Advantage. While holding the *Bloody Lisa* you can also use a Bonus Action to take the Dash action, or to make an additional attack with the Blade.

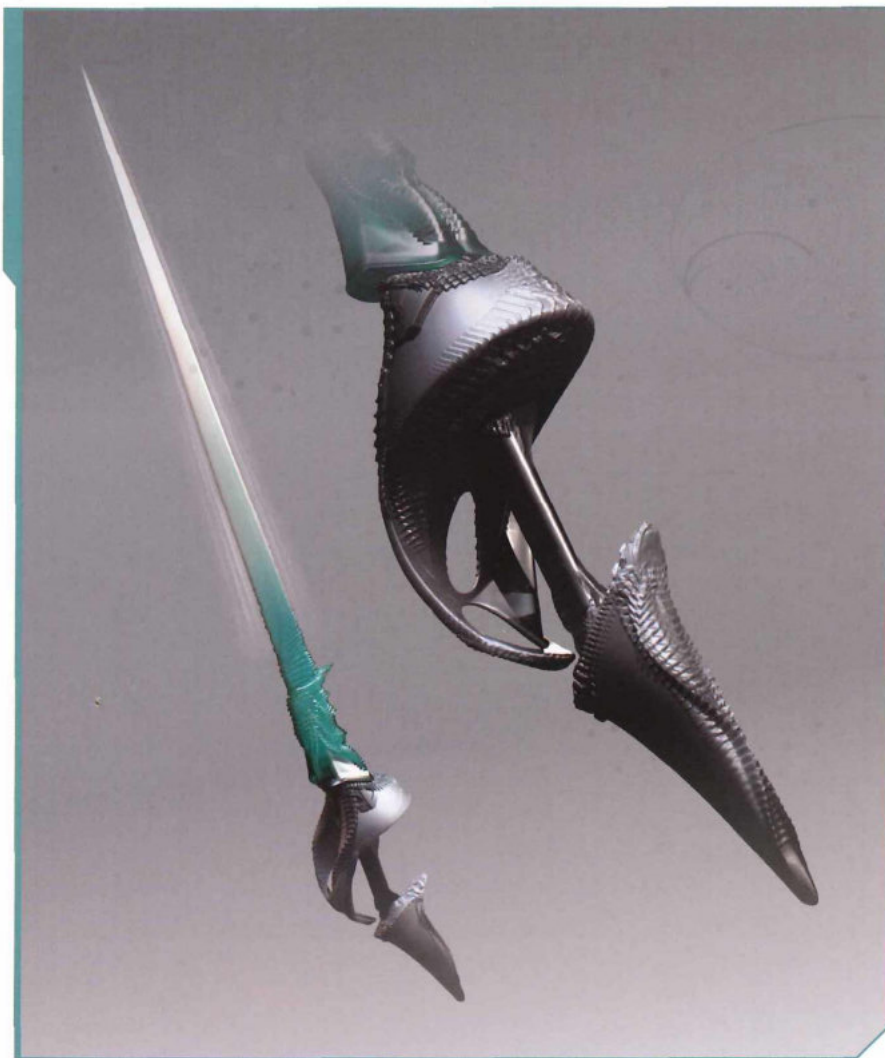
Mishap. *Bloody Lisa*’s strengths come at a price. When you roll a 1 on an attack roll with *Bloody Lisa*, you are driven into a berserk frenzy. While frenzied, you must attack the closest creature each turn, using *Bloody Lisa* to maximum effect. This frenzy grants Resistance to all damage types but doesn’t end until the frenzied creature starts their turn and can’t perceive any other living creatures.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Celestial Gear (Mechanics)
- Celestial Weaponry: Special (Mechanics)
- Pharmaceutical Tattoo (Genetics)
- Subliminal Primer (Electronics)





Deconstructor

Proficiency (Heavy Gun), Heavy, Two-Handed, Celestial Remnant

When idle, the “Deconstructor” nestles within a globule of morphic matter, its dormant state being transparent. This globule has the capacity to alter its shape, hue, and texture, bestowing upon the weapon an unrivaled camouflage capability. Despite the consistency of the morphic matter’s mass and volume, it can mimic nearly any form. Upon activation, the morphic matter clings tightly to the forearm, transforming into the initial ammunition stock. The weapon operates as a molecular accelerator, discharging kinetic projectiles at hyper-speed. Its exceptional ammunition generation process marks one of its most potent features.

The weapon’s inlet side manifests as a funnel-shaped structure, roughly 16 inches in diameter at its base. It can interface with any solid matter, be it floor, wall, machinery, spaceship hull, or even a corpse. An internal deconstructor disintegrates the solid substance into molecular fragments, which are then recomposed within the weapon’s core into flechettes that are accelerated to hyper-speed.

The morphic matter provides immediate ammunition while on the move, but essentially, the system promises an inexhaustible projectile supply as long as the funnel base remains in contact with solid matter. The funnel also replenishes the morphic matter encasing the weapon when not in use.

One must exercise caution with the weapon’s positioning. Excessive dissolution of a structure hollows it out like Swiss cheese, leading to the collapse of walls, floors, or worse. It is crucial to maintain constant movement of the weapon along the surface it consumes. Although considered rudimentary by the high standards of modern Celestials, the weapon’s infinite ammunition source and extreme firing rate allow it to inundate its target, eventually overpowering even the most advanced defenses.

Benefits. The *Deconstructor* grants a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with it and deals 5d10 Piercing damage on a hit (range: 100/200 feet). It has the Burst property and never runs out of ammunition. However, if you move less than 10 feet in a turn when you fire the *Deconstructor*, it severely damages any nearby structures, inflicting 2d10 Piercing damage to objects and buildings within 5 feet of you and destroys floors, outdoor areas, and the like; any remaining walkable surface becomes Difficult Terrain.

Camouflage. You can use a Bonus Action to hide the *Deconstructor* and another Bonus Action to restore it to its weapon configuration.

Mishap. The rudimentary sentient system governing the weapon operates silently, offering no interaction with you. However, if starved, it can leech matter from its grip, potentially dissolving parts of your hand. Usually, it begins with a mere prick of pain, a gentle reminder of its ceaseless appetite.

If you roll a 1 on an attack roll when using the *Deconstructor*, it bites you. You take 2d10 Piercing damage.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Celestial Weaponry: Guns (Mechanics)
- Limestone: Basic (Genetics)

Grey Widower

Proficiency (Rifle), Celestial Relic

The “Grey Widower” has a subtle influence on its owner. In form it is a compact gun with a variety of extendable parts such as sights, stock, and similar aids, allowing it to be used as anything from a pistol to a carbine. Its blessing is clarity. When shooting, the user finds themselves able to block out distraction, worry, doubt, and fear to make the perfect shot. They can shoot through a crowd of brawling people to hit one particular target, as though the world grows still and quiet for them in the moment of aiming. It doesn’t demand loyalty or inspire delusions of grandeur.

Those around its owner may never see any sign of the weapon’s influence until they become its next victim. The *Grey Widower*, left unused, manufactures a target. It works on its owner’s perceptions of someone around them, deleting positive memories, accentuating the negative, and freighting other recollections with a spurious emotional burden of negative thoughts, until its wielder “remembers” the target as their enemy, an enmity going back for as long as they’ve known them. The shift in perceptions is subtle and all-encompassing. To the *Grey Widower*’s owner, it seems entirely consistent and believable, and anyone trying to persuade them otherwise is obviously in league with their nemesis. And then, after pulling the trigger, the widower removes all memory of the act, the target, and any other associated elements. The wielder is left with a mysterious death they know nothing about, of a person they don’t recall. They move on, and the widower chooses a new victim to transform into a lifelong nemesis for execution. Several serial killers have merely been the unwitting pawns of the *Grey Widower*.

Benefits. The *Grey Widower* grants a +3 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with it and deals 4d10 Piercing damage on a hit (range: 500/900 feet). As a Bonus Action, you can designate a target, which stays designated until dead or another target is designated. Your attacks against designated targets have Advantage and deal an extra 2d10 Piercing damage on a hit.

Troubled Sleep. Though subtle, the *Grey Widower* slowly corrodes your mind. Each time you wake from being Unconscious, this Mortal Gift deletes a small number of positive memories—particularly memories pertaining to current comrades. You are left with a feeling that something is missing but are not sure exactly what or why.

Mishap. Over time, the *Grey Widower* also observes your interactions with others and begins manipulating their perception, accentuating negative interactions and sowing doubt. If you roll a 1 on an attack roll while using the *Grey Widower*, your nearest ally that can see you must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. If they fail the saving throw and have a Reaction available, they must make one attack against you, using that Reaction.

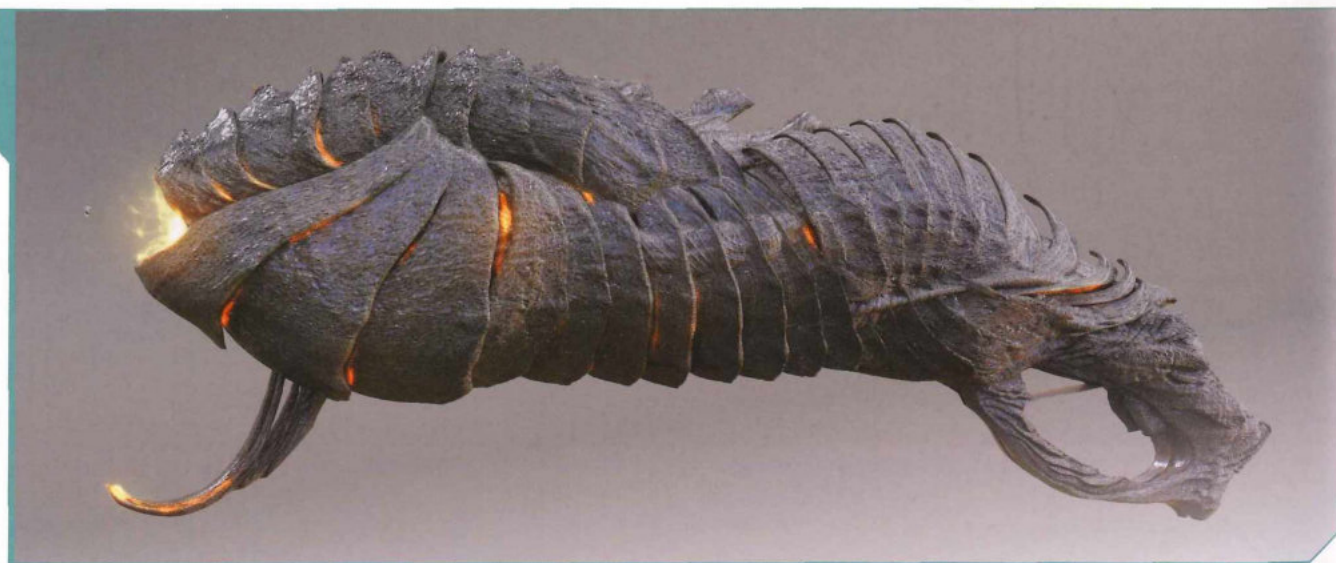
Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These must come from the following category:

- Treasury Remnant: Gun

Possible Technology

- Celestial Weaponry: Guns (Mechanics)
- Evolving Intelligence (Electronics)



AARON SIMS CREATIVE

Merciless Oath

Proficiency (Rifle), Celestial Relic

Another fine example of a Mortal Gift is the rifle known as the "Merciless Oath". This is a sniper's tool containing a nano factory that fashions its own flechette ammunition, which the weapon fires within a cycling stream of ultrasonic and electromagnetic energy. The combined effect is a short burst devastating to both organic and mechanical systems. However, and unlike most Mortal Gifts, the oath is curiously choosy. In order to pull the trigger, the wielder must sincerely believe that their target is guilty of a crime worthy of execution. Only those who are meting out justice—in their own minds—are fit owners of the oath. Which all sounds very high-minded except that, as with the other gifts, the *Merciless Oath* harbors a deep need to fulfill its function, which is to say to punish the guilty. Unless it happens to fall into the hands of a natural avenger with a long list of grudges, this can go one of two ways. If the weapon's current owner crosses paths with someone whose nature is more suited to the oath's preferences, then the weapon implants a desire in them to take the *Merciless Oath* from its undeserving holder. Alternatively, the weapon works on its wielder, subconsciously encouraging them to seek out those deserving of its ire, or else driving them to consider more and more trivial acts as requiring of the ultimate sanction.



Benefits. The *Merciless Oath* seems simple and powerful on the surface. It grants a +3 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls made with it and deals 3d8 Piercing plus 3d8 Electrical damage on a hit (range: 300/800 feet).

However, the gun can be fired only if you genuinely believe the target is guilty of a crime worthy of execution. If you are doubtful or don't have enough evidence, the weapon consumes the action but doesn't fire. (You are always able to fire the gun back at someone who has attacked you.)

To facilitate its own use, the *Merciless Oath* slowly corrupts you, causing you to classify more and more actions as potentially criminal and worthy of lethal consequence.

Mishap. If you roll a 1 on an attack roll while using *Merciless Oath* you must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or you throw the weapon 10 feet towards the target you were shooting at. The target must then make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. If they fail the save they have the Dominated condition for 1 hour and they do whatever they can to use *Merciless Oath* against you.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These can come from any of the following categories:

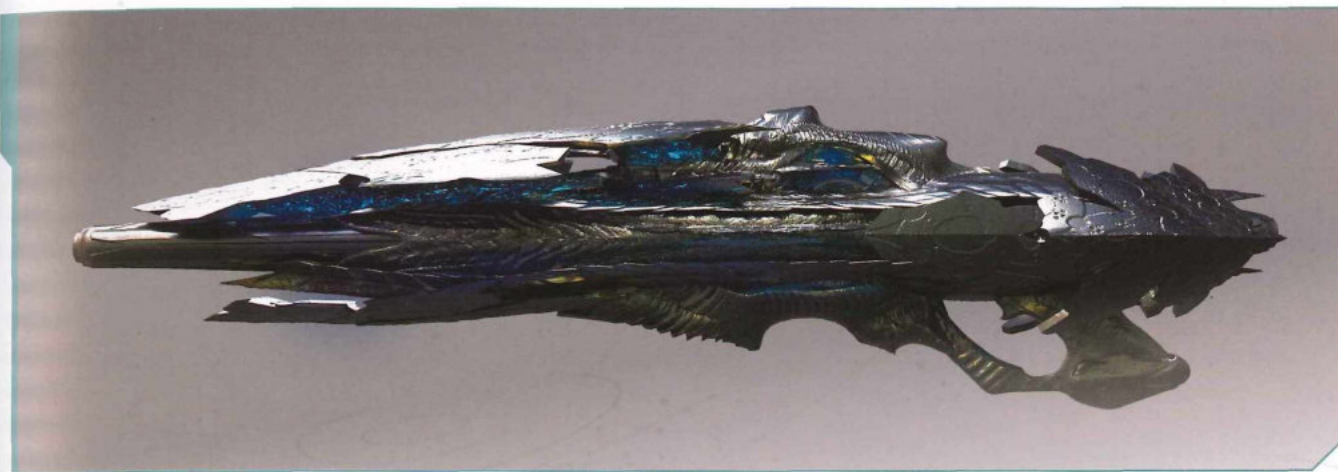
- Treasury Remnant: Gun
- Treasury Remnant: Projector

Possible Technology

- Celestial Augment (Mechanics)
- Celestial Weaponry: Guns (Mechanics)
- Subliminal Primer (Electronics)



AARON SIMS CREATIVE



Workhorse

Proficiency (Rifle), Celestial Relic

The "Workhorse" is one of the least flashy examples of a Mortal Gift. It is a solid weapon, seemingly a simple chemical propellant piece, perhaps even something a human might build. Internally there are a lot of moving parts. The weapon adjusts its caliber automatically to take a range of ammunition. Its interaction with the mind of the user is one of obedience to orders and loyalty to purpose, the soldier's friend. Those using it are constantly assured, at a subconscious level, of the rightness of doing what they are told and fighting for their cause. Camaraderie and esprit de corps are extolled, the enemy are lessened. Killing the designated foe becomes easier and easier, leading to a high-supernatural speed of decision-making and trigger-pulling, zero hesitation, instant friend-from-foe identification. Which all sounds like the general's dream—if only we could mass produce them!—until the war ends. The *Workhorse* doesn't approve of wars ending.

Similarly, it doesn't approve of free agents without a cause. Outside of an active service environment its owners start to "remember" novel orders, or to characterize others as "the enemy" in a slowly growing delusion that can eventually manufacture an entirely fictitious cause to fight for, and a war without end.

Benefits. The *Workhorse* functions as a Rifle with variable range and damage. You can adjust calibers as a Bonus Action, changing damage amounts and the range:

- **Short-Range.** 4d12 Piercing Damage (range: 20/50 feet).
- **Mid-Range (Default):** 4d10 Piercing damage (range: 50/250 feet).
- **Long-Range:** 4d8 Piercing (range: 250/750 feet).

Aware. The *Workhorse's* quick designation of friend or foe also allows you to add your Dexterity modifier to Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Swiftness. In addition to its versatility, the *Workhorse* grants you Advantage on Initiative rolls.

Drawbacks. Using the *Workhorse* causes you to quickly mistrust others, increasing your aggression and diminishing your trust. Any Wisdom (Insight) checks against suspicious individuals automatically fail and always reveal that the target is lying, attempting to ambush or harm you or your friends, or is plotting against you. Finally, whenever the *Workhorse* kills, you receive a release of chemicals, making killing both pleasurable and addictive.

Mishap. On a roll of 1 when making an attack roll with the *Workhorse*, your turn abruptly ends as you become locked in an argument with the *Workhorse*. You also can't take Reactions until the start of your next turn.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 2 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this relic. These must come from the following category:

- Treasury Remnant: Gun

Possible Technology

- Celestial Weaponry: Guns (Mechanics)
- Subliminal Primer (Electronics)

ARTIFACTS

Legendary technology to reshape civilizations ...
or destroy them.



>>>> THE MOST DANGEROUS ITEMS IN THE

Cluster are without argument the Remnant artifacts that have been left behind by ancient Celestial Dominions, most of which have vanished over the millennia. The use of most of these artifacts is beyond the ken of humanity, in truth even some Celestial Dominions struggle with deciphering the true nature of these awe-inspiring creations.

These artifacts are meant to be dissected to harvest technological advancement for humanity, much like other Remnants. However, artifacts (unlike relics) are never meant to be used by characters and thus have no corresponding rules describing their activation. Artifacts serve as narrative anchors for campaigns—an entire series of adventures could be undertaken just to ultimately discover one of these devices, or to keep an artifact out of the hands of Celestials eager to activate it.

Aerolite

Much like *Proto-Matter* and *Tectonic Seeds*—though on a considerably more mundane scale—*Aerolite* is a Remnant technology that can be turned to a multitude of purposes if one can only control it properly. Compared to a great many unpleasant surprises left over from the Remnant Era, *Aerolite* is positively benign stuff and very amenable to practical use. In fact, the base technology of *Aerolite* is related to limestone; careless deployment can, however, cause localized catastrophe and destroy whole cities. *Aerolite* is, simply put, a building material with remarkable properties. In its quiescent state it is found as dense cylindrical cakes of a grey material like smooth plastic, from 4 inches to several feet across. Larger examples are heavy enough to require appropriate machinery to lift and transport, but even a hand-sized disc of *Aerolite* produces seemingly miraculous results.

The tricky part is instructing the material in what you want built. Thankfully, *Aerolite* is decidedly less fussy than most similar artifacts and accepts information in a variety of forms—subsonic, electromagnetic, or even a direct data link through a variety of bespoke interfaces, mostly of Celestial design. *Aerolite* is useful enough that a handful of Celestial cultures have been thought to replicate the substance, with some limited degree of success. Unusually, therefore, this is a Remnant Era technology that has been (relatively) understood and mastered by succeeding cultures.

Watching *Aerolite* work is an unparalleled spectacle. Disturbing, too (especially if it goes wrong, but more of that later). Once the activation signal is given—remotely if the architects have any sense—the little disc of material erupts instantly into a prodigious geyser of expanding material, boiling out like foam, setting, and then giving rise to more. An entire structure explodes outwards from the disc in a disconcertingly organic way, as though watching a sped-up recording of a plant growing. After mere minutes, the *Aerolite* has built itself into the desired shape and set as hard as stone. The finish is generally rough and requires a certain amount of work, cladding, and smoothing away, but the whole should be structurally sound and durable—an instant building ready for furnishing and occupation. Amongst the Celestials who most utilize

the technology there are even specialist architect-artists whose work is signed with elegant ornaments generated by the *Aerolite* in its rapid growth. Others use the material to create art on a macro-scale—sculptures intricately devised and then unleashed in seconds. Careful planning and a good control interface can exercise very fine control over the end result.

A small *Aerolite* cake grows a large building. A large cake grows a city—an entire city including specific building designs, repeated neighborhoods, street plans, and hollow conduits for sewers and utilities if the architect has been rigorous enough in their preparation. The technology achieves its effect because the resulting buildings are constructed of super-light hollow fiber. The walls are mostly air and derive their strength from the cross-sections of the individual strands. The end structure weighs the same as the original cake, and conscientious architects are advised to plan their structure with anchored foundations because strong winds can dislodge entire *Aerolite* buildings. *Aerolite* construction is, of course, an absolute boon to colonists on a new world. A little pre-planning creates an entire community within moments, tailored to whatever challenges the new world presents. The high durability of the walls lends the technology a military application too, using the same programming to throw up identical instant command bunkers or barracks wherever a mobile force needs to bivouac. Given that *Aerolite* doesn't naturally degrade, some worlds are littered with abandoned structures, often overgrown with local plant life and inhabited by animals.

As with all such technologies, *Aerolite* can be misused. Most commonly this comes down to misprogramming. Once the *Aerolite* is activated there's no stopping it, and the end results are of course fantastically durable. Many worlds have enormous fungal eruptions of stone as testament to incautious architects or faulty equipment. More than a few extremists and revolutionaries have spotted the potential for disruption that even a little *Aerolite* can cause, too. Detonating an *Aerolite* "bomb" in the heart of a city causes as much damage and loss of life as a regular explosion but also leaves behind a solid obstruction that might be shaped as a statement of the perpetrator's ideology and requires considerable work to chisel away.



Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 3 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Biomining (Genetics)
- Livestone: Advanced (Genetics)
- Terraforming (Astronautics)

Auspex

It is said that one of the characteristics that differentiates humanity—and, by extension, Celestials—from animals is the ability to plan—to anticipate; to analyze and manipulate current circumstances to move later events towards a desired outcome. Assuming one believes in the doctrine of free will, such manipulations are common on the personal and individual level ... but for a society to thrive, these processes must be extrapolated across a much greater sphere. By their very nature, macro-predictions are rife with uncertainty. Many Celestial Dominions have attempted to optimize their forecasting abilities through the co-application of various methodologies: advanced social and behavioral sciences; mathematical principles and statistical analysis; and a close examination of oft repeated historical patterns. Ultimately, these efforts had limited success ... until the creation of the *Auspex*.

In simple terms, the *Auspex* is a prediction machine—one that extrapolates current data to construct multiple long-term models capable of guiding worlds, and even entire systems, towards a desired end. However, the *Auspex* is more than just an advanced modeling AI; it also requires a prominent biological component. Whoever uses this strange device must have a mind that has been properly prepared through a combination of training, carefully designed drugs, genetic manipulation, and sheer force of will. The user must also be willing to allow infection from a virus—a microscopic parasite that bonds with the neurons and synapses of the brain. This parasite allows the user to experience a perfectly simulated virtual reality environment whenever they use the *Auspex*. It also records everything the user experiences in this simulation, as the *Auspex* runs thousands upon thousands of possible future scenarios in pursuit of the perfect outcome.

The user can change virtually any variable in these scenarios with a mere thought—imagining simulations where different choices are made—and see the ever-changing results. The quantum computing abilities of the *Auspex* allow these scenarios to unfold at an incredible pace, enabling the user to

foresee countless possible futures extending forward multiple centuries in the space of mere seconds. The effect this multiple-life experience has on human or Celestial minds is extraordinarily dangerous. The brain hasn't evolved to retain thousands of years of memories across wildly divergent or conflicting scenarios, and even with the augmentations of the *Auspex* and the brain parasite there is always the risk of overwhelming the consciousness, leaving the user a drooling, mindless husk. To compensate for this, the *Auspex* itself automatically “edits” the brain parasite after each use, deleting and erasing the scenarios that were deemed least desirable. There is also another risk when using the *Auspex*—users risk falling into a simulation-loop, in which they rerun scenarios again and again in search of ever more perfect outcomes. In these situations, the user must be forcibly removed from the *Auspex* ... though this greatly increases the chances of irreparable damage to their mental faculties.

There are reports that those who use the *Auspex* frequently are eventually able to identify timeline breakpoints in their day-to-day lives; recognizing watershed moments that would have a profound effect on future events and running limited versions of the *Auspex* simulations in their own heads so they can make choices leading to one of several divergent outcomes. The reliability of the *Auspex* predictions is, by any measure, incredibly accurate. Though extremely rare, Dominions whose leaders have gained access to *Auspex* technology have endured long reigns of growth and prosperity. But even with the ability to divine the future, no Dominion lasts forever. Inevitably all empires must fall, often due to an inescapable confluence of events: an unstoppable civil war; a star going nova; or a completely novel and unpredictable disaster that even the *Auspex* can't account for.

Despite this, the advantages the *Auspex* offers to any society can't be overstated. Their value is so great that any who are fortunate enough to obtain one quickly understand that they should keep its existence secret, lest they invite efforts by rivals to steal—or disable—the device.

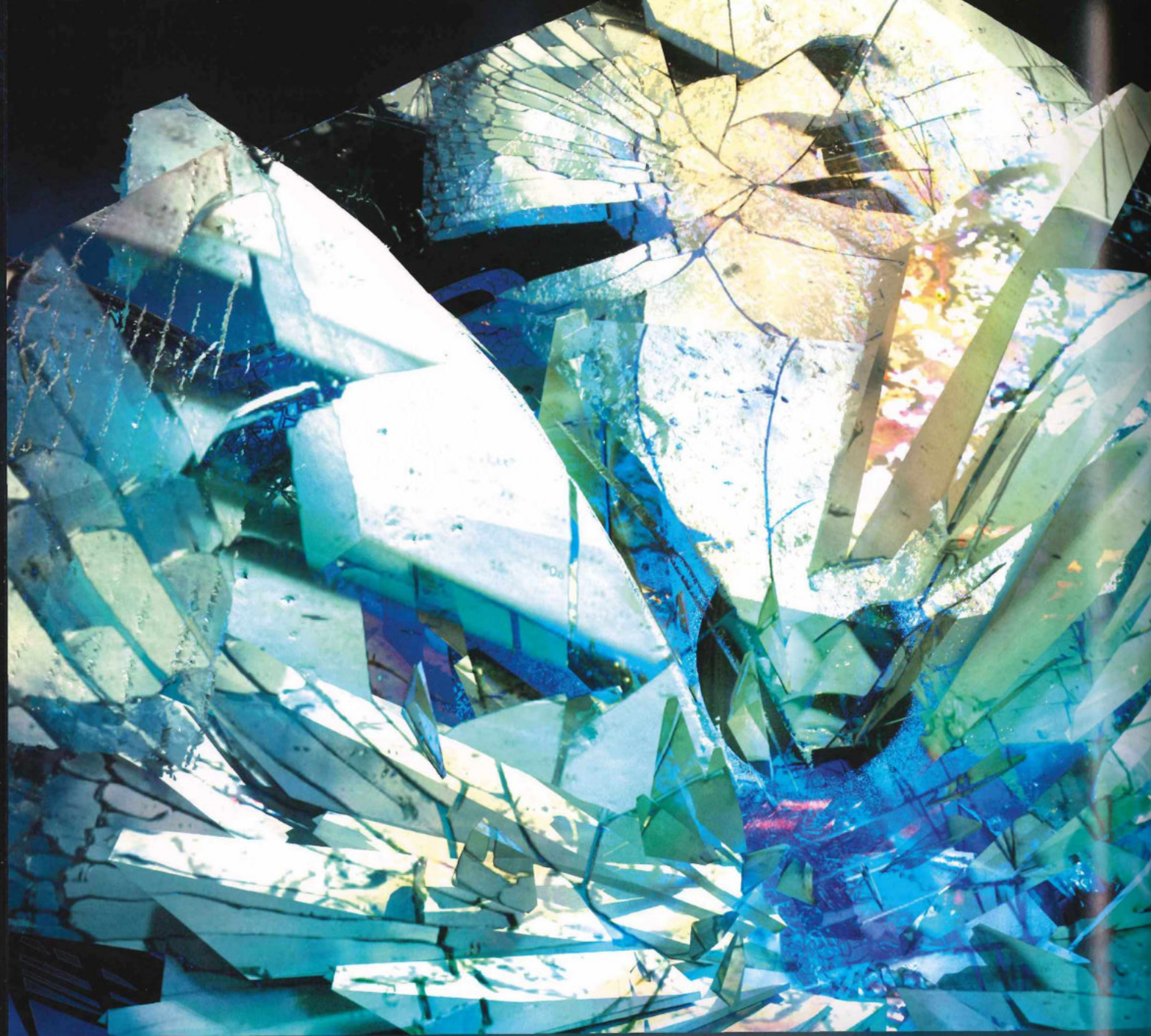


Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 5 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Cellular Morph (Genetics)
- Entropy Drive (Astronautics)
- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Subliminal Primer (Electronics)



Logos

One of the most valued and easily applicable Remnant artifacts is the *Logos*. The exact nature of the *Logos* is unknown, as its original creators have long since vanished. Some claim the *Logos* is simply an interactive encyclopedia of Elohim knowledge, but others speculate it is actually something much more complex: a carefully constrained virtual intelligence imbued with all the Elohim's greatest secrets and discoveries. In either case, the *Logos* effectively jumpstarts any technological research by providing new knowledge and

advanced scientific analysis that catapults the society in question forward in leaps and bounds. Even the technologies of the most powerful existing Celestial Dominions benefit from this guidance, and for less developed cultures—such as human worlds—the potential scientific advancement is always transformational.

The *Logos* determines the technological capabilities of the user accessing it and provides sufficient knowledge only towards the next step in advancing the user's civilization. It doesn't reveal technological secrets that are far beyond the user's understanding.



Trade Value

Celestial Dominions don't trade for a *Logos*.

Possible Technology

There are many different technologies learned from a *Logos* that can transform a society. Roll 2d4—the *Logos* has that many of the following technologies (the Game Master selects which are appropriate):

- Antimatter Solar Farm (Electronics)
- Assembly Glove (Mechanics)
- Biomining (Genetics)
- Celestial Augment (Mechanics)
- Celestial Gear (Mechanics)
- Cellular Reincarnation (Medicine)
- Evolving Intelligence (Electronics)
- He3 Daedalus Balloon (Astronautics)
- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Livestone: Basic (Genetics)
- Metalloceramic (Mechanics)
- Reaction Mass Tank: He3 Technology
- Reconstructive Foundry (Mechanics)
- Space Elevator (Astronautics)
- Space Tower (Astronautics)
- Subliminal Primer (Medicine)
- Uranic Gene (Genetics)

Lupere's Mirror

You can still find them unclaimed, out there. An ancient site, a ruin, and in a chamber deep within it, the mirror. Sometimes just jagged fragments, sometimes a single perfect sphere. So, you stand there, alone on some dead alien world, and look into the mirror. There's you, in your environment suit; there are the cracked walls of the place behind you, as far as your light reaches. And perhaps you look a bit more heroic, in the mirror, than you do in real life, and that's good. And perhaps something moves out in the dark behind your reflection, and that's less good. The original purpose of these devices is utterly unknown. It seems impossible that the vanished civilization that created them did so with an eye merely to vanity. A lot of superstitions have grown up about the mirrors and what they can actually accomplish, which further muddies any speculation.

The substance of a *Lupere's Mirror* contains a sophisticated artificial intelligence that exists as a self-organizing network spread across it. It observes whatever the mirror would "reflect" and then generates that reflection, with modifications. These appear to be cued from information the system gleans from those who stand before it. The popular belief that the mirrors read minds is certainly nonsense, but the devices plainly have some very sophisticated means of interpreting the body language and mood cues of a variety of species. The effects of the system's interference with the reflection are subtle to start with. Its primary user—usually the first individual to look into the mirror after any long period of disuse—is usually shown as more impressive, and others who appear in the mirror have their images tweaked in insightful ways, often revealing aspects of their personality and nature that may have been hidden.

Over time, the *Lupere's Mirror* continues to alter details of the world it is reflecting—and also the world it isn't reflecting. Users of these devices become fascinated by the world within the glass. There might be mysterious objects shown there that don't exist in the real world. Or there might be suggestions of movement at the very edge of the glass, as though someone stands just out of sight. In later stages there are entities appearing at the edge of vision, and then stepping fully into sight—beautiful individuals tailored to the aesthetics of the primary viewer, strange creatures

never seen, in reality, nightmarish visions. A whole unreal cast is called up within the mirror, usually showing only themselves when the primary viewer is alone. Some scholars theorize these images—or some of them—represent reproductions of previous users of the mirror.

In most cases the primary owner of a *Lupere's Mirror* becomes more and more engaged with the world within the mirror, which itself becomes more and more fantastical, reflecting everything in a way that seems grotesque and disturbing to anyone else, but weirdly compelling to the primary viewer. The act of looking into the mirror triggers neural pathways similar to those involved with drug addiction. Eventually the primary viewer may never want to leave the room with the mirror and jealously guards it from all others. Long-term ownership of one of these devices almost always leads to terrible things. This bizarre and damaging progression of function begs the question of their original purpose even more, of course. Because the *Lupere's Mirrors* are an incredibly sophisticated piece of atomic-level engineering

Explorers often find the *Lupere's Mirrors* in pieces. They are, after all, only flat planes of a glass-like substance and as fragile as that suggests. A little experimentation has shown that every shard of a mirror retains its full functionality. The only change is the size of window the viewer is granted into that shifting otherworld. The best markets are definitely for larger pieces—full body mirrors or grander—but it is possible to have a reflected otherworld that fits in your pocket. The mirrors' ability to give a shrewd assessment of someone's inner nature means that even a small piece of one is a very useful tool.

And so, at last we come to Lupere Waston, whose name is now forever associated with the *Lupere's Mirror*, at least to human scholars. Waston was an explorer, scientist, and maverick to whom we owe most of what little we know about how the mirrors work. He came into possession of several and was himself powerfully affected by them. One of his discoveries was that nearby mirrors "sync" together, displaying a consistently altered world within their depths. Waston's eventual fate is unknown. The persistent tall tale is that he found an alignment of planes that allowed him to step into a mirror, but this is no more real than the reflections themselves.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 4 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Evolving Intelligence (Electronics)
- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Limestone: Advanced (Genetics)



Nightmare Factories

It's hard to escape the conclusion that some past Celestial cultures were, not to put too fine a point on it, seriously messed up. The fact that we have something generally referred to as a "Nightmare Factory" is fairly solid proof of it. It's not just that these particular Remnant artifacts are spectacularly nasty in their operation and apparent purpose, it's also that they are just ... impractical.

A functioning *Nightmare Factory* comes in two parts. The transmitter is tiny, the size of a thumbnail, to be secreted somewhere near the victim. Preferably wherever they sleep, or in some item they reliably carry around with them. The operation of the factory takes at least seven days, during which the transmitter needs to be close to the victim. The factory chamber receives a constant signal from the transmitter, feeding it data about the victim. Hence the chamber must be kept within a couple miles of the transmitter, being moved if necessary to maintain signal. The signal itself fluctuates across a predetermined electromagnetic band and is difficult to detect, but not impossible. All these details contribute to the complexity of actually achieving anything with a *Nightmare Factory*. However, if you can get one to work, the results can be spectacularly unpleasant.

The transmitter keys into the neural impulses of the victim, decoding them, exploring their psyche. It generates impulses in a number of primitive centers of the brain, experimenting with precisely what images and concepts provoke the most primal fear and revulsion. Over this period the victim likely feels a slowly growing sense of unease and disquiet, suffering unexplained bouts of panic and anxiety, paranoia, sleep paralysis, and actual nightmares. Towards the end of the preparation period, when the chamber itself is ready to disgorge its contents, the transmitter introduces specific elements into the victim's nocturnal imagery, readying them to meet their nemesis. The data received from the transmitter is used by the chamber to fabricate an engineered life form specifically tailored to the innermost fears and horrors of the victim. When it is complete, the incubation sac splits open and the thing, whatever it is, is released into the wild. The engineered nightmare is imprinted onto the victim, taught a knowledge of where they are

(at least at the point of release), and given an urge to seek them out.

With the more overtly horrific nightmares, simply being shown them might be enough to kill the victim or shut their mind down from sheer neural overload. The target has, after all, been wound up towards this moment for several days. The way that the nightmare has been personally tailored to be the thing most loathsome to them can't be overstated. If they survive that first moment of confrontation, the nightmare then follows whatever course of action is most feared. Some nightmares physically attack, others just chase and stalk. A few engage in behavior that seems innocuous to others but is unbearable to the victim. Similarly, the degree of intelligence a nightmare is engineered with depends on what role they are required to play. Most are little more than feral animals, but the factories have also turned out monsters able to second-guess their targets at every turn or reveal all their victims' most shameful secrets.

The precise effects of a nightmare on others vary. Most are monstrous and appalling to spectators. Though they tend to be durable and are very physically powerful if their role requires it, they are entirely mortal and succumb to sufficient physical trauma. Often, they don't even defend themselves from attack, instead fixating solely on their one victim. Nightmares that survive their victim can persist for some time. They may or may not have biological functions such as digestive tracts and the ability to sustain themselves, depending on their form and particular function. Once their target is dead, by whatever means, they have no purpose left. Some attack others nearby, but most become quiescent and easily disposed of.

Although the factories have garnered a certain notoriety in popular culture, they are the most inefficient means imaginable with which to launch an attack on a foe. For this reason, some theorize that we have fundamentally misunderstood the purpose of the devices. They are a fantastically complex piece of technology, as close to mind-reading as most machines ever get. The idea of all that ingenuity devoted to such a banal end is almost offensive. However, if the *Nightmare Factories* do have some other primary purpose beyond putting the ultimate frighteners on someone, nobody has ever been able to find out just what that is.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 3 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Evolving Intelligence (Electronics)
- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Livestone: Advanced (Genetics)
- Reclaimer (Mechanics)

AARON SIMS CREATIVE

REMAINTS

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Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 3 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Evolving Intelligence (Electronics)
- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)
- Livestone: Advanced (Genetics)
- Reclaimer (Mechanics)

AARON SIMS CREATIVE

REMAINTS

CHAPTER 6 REMNANTS

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Trade Value

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Possible Technology

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AARON SIMS CREATIVE

REMAINTS

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- REMAINTS
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Proto-Matter

An ancient Earth philosopher once proclaimed, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." Perhaps no greater example of this exists in the Cluster than the wondrous enigma that is *Proto-Matter*. This bizarre substance appears to the human eye as a blob of milky gas suspended in the center of a 15-foot cubical frame. In actuality the substance is solid, and the ever-shifting shape and form is nothing but an illusion ... or perhaps the resulting echoes of strange extra-dimensional properties.

Despite numerous efforts to study and categorize it, human scientists still can't grasp the fundamental essence of *Proto-Matter's* construction. At times it exhibits properties of subatomic particles, other tests indicate it is actually a frozen wave function—somehow it is both and neither simultaneously. Much of quantum science theory exists in this unspecified realm, yet *Proto-Matter* is something completely different that defies all previous research and experience. Needless to say, all attempts to create new *Proto-Matter* have been abject failures.

The frame that surrounds and supports the hovering milky cloud in its center is called a hyper-Neumann cube. Any efforts to tamper with, damage, or disassemble the supporting framework results in the *Proto-Matter* instantly ceasing to exist ... or perhaps it simply takes on a new form or state that is completely undetectable by any known instrument.

Even more amazing than its bizarre form and puzzling observed properties is what *Proto-Matter* can actually do. Any item small enough to be passed through one side of the cube is slowly absorbed into the surface of the cloud. A moment later, the item reemerges from the cloud along the opposite face of the cube ... along with a completely identical copy. A simple screwdriver passed through creates two screwdrivers that are indistinguishable from each other. Every scratch on the handle, every nick on the blade, every bit of wear and tear is replicated. Even at the atomic level, everything is exactly the same. And with each duplication, the amount of *Proto-Matter* remaining in the cube is reduced by the exact mass of the item reproduced.

The duplication process works on any object small enough to be passed through the edges of the cube.

Simple or complex tools, entire working computers, original works of art, forbidden Remnant weapons—all can be instantly and perfectly recreated. Even living matter or whole creatures can be passed through, though the cube doesn't appear to copy consciousness, memories, or personality. In the early experiments, a mouse was passed through, resulting in twins emerging from the other side. One—presumably the original—seemed completely unharmed and unchanged, but the other displayed none of the training, knowledge, or behavioral quirks of its twin—though otherwise it seemed completely unharmed. However, the cubes are rarely used to duplicate living beings anymore, as this can easily be done through other methods—such as cloning—that don't consume the irreplaceable *Proto-Matter*.

The cubes are incredibly rare, and one of the most valuable artifacts a Traveler can find. Whatever civilization created them has long since vanished, and what is left behind are mere bits and scraps. It is theorized that each cube was once filled with *Proto-Matter*, though now after untold millennia of use most are tiny clouds only a few inches in diameter or less. With each use the cloud shrinks as the *Proto-Matter* is consumed to create a replica of the object passing through; as a result, the cubes are now reserved for duplicating only the rarest and most valuable of objects. Typically, these are powerful Remnant artifacts beyond the comprehension of any current human or Celestial science. In rare circumstances, the cubes have been used to rapidly duplicate a crucial vaccine to halt the spread of a deadly plague, but even this noble act is considered by many to be a waste of *Proto-Matter*.

On rare occasions someone has tried to duplicate an item with a mass beyond that of the remaining *Proto-Matter* within the cube. In these instances, not only is the item not duplicated, but it is utterly destroyed—torn apart at the sub-atomic level and dispersed in an explosive burst of energy that completely consumes the remaining *Proto-Matter* and the hyper-Neumann cube containing it ... along with anything or anyone unfortunate enough to be within the immediate vicinity. Because of these potentially catastrophic consequences, anyone with access to a hyper-Neumann cube is exceedingly careful not to attempt to duplicate anything that may exceed the mass of the *Proto-Matter* remaining.



Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 4 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Livestone: Advanced (Genetics)
- Metalloceramic (Mechanics)
- Reclaimer (Mechanics)
- Reconstructive Foundry (Mechanics)
- Terraforming (Astronautics)



Relativistic Perditor

Of all the treasures in the Cluster, none is as rare or as valued as a habitable planet. Eden worlds are so prized that the Elohim have forbidden the Dominions from developing technologies that could destroy them, and no Celestials would dare violate this Law ... but that was not always the case.

Relativistic Perditors are planet killers devised by Celestials known only as the Angelicus in the early stages of the Crucible Era. Ovoid weapons a mere 80 feet in length, a single perditor has the potential to completely obliterate an entire planet. Typically, they were launched from systems many light-years away from their target, using sophisticated AI targeting to navigate across the vast distances of space as they rapidly accelerate to 0.99 lightspeed.

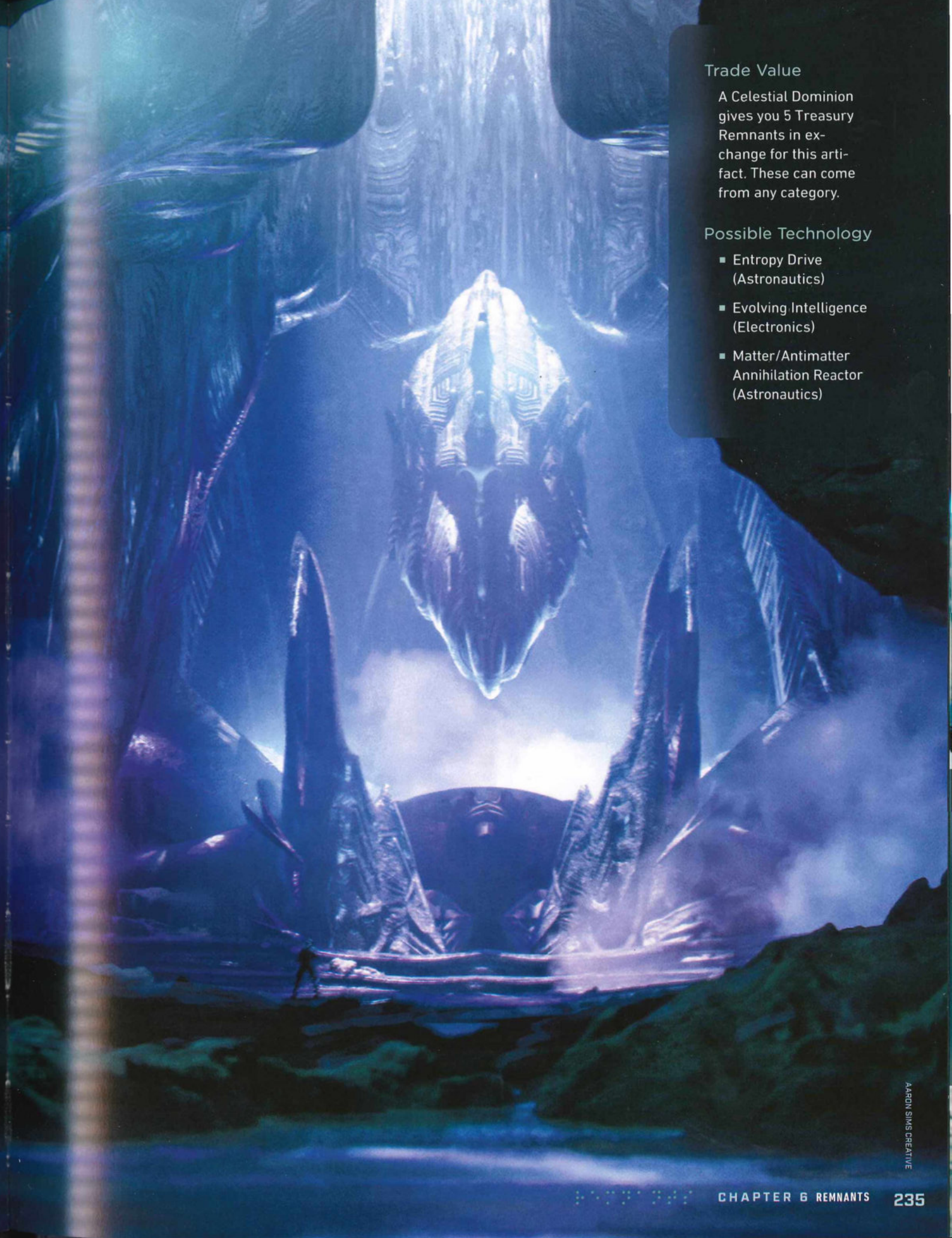
Some believe it was the creation and deployment of these planet-killers that led the Angelicus into war with the Elohim ... a war that resulted in the complete extinction of the Angelicus across the Cluster. Others believe the Angelicus—seeing the horrors of what they had unleashed—evolved into the Elohim themselves and cast aside their previous warlike tendencies to become protectors of the Cluster. Whatever the true explanation, there can be no debate that the *Relativistic Perditor* is one of the most truly terrifying weapons ever devised.

Because they travel at nearly the speed of light, designing a warning system to detect incoming

Relativistic Perditors is impossible—by the time a signal could reflect off an incoming threat to alert a targeted world, the perditor itself would already have arrived. Even if they could be detected, however, stopping one is, in itself, an impossibility. Traveling at relativistic speeds, Lorentz contractions break down the physical bonds holding the ovoid together, reducing it to a flat, disk-shaped cloud of carbon atoms. Upon impact with its target, this cloud is traveling too fast to fuse with the atmosphere. Instead, it slams into the surface, releasing enough energy to puncture holes in the mantle of the world and creating a crater so large and deep that it exposes the planet's molten core.

The devastation of such an impact is thousands of times greater than the meteor strike that wiped out the dinosaurs on Earth—virtually no lifeform more complex than simple single-celled organisms survives such a strike. Needless to say, no sane Traveler would ever consider unleashing a perditor and its planet killing capabilities.

While tens of thousands of years have passed since the last recorded strike from a *Relativistic Perditor*, it is possible that there could one day be another impact. Given the nature of the weapon, it can take decades, centuries, or even millennia for the perditor to eventually reach its target. Though unlikely, the possibility exists that some long-extinct Dominion has previously launched such weapons at targets in the Cluster, and total annihilation is even now speeding towards unsuspecting worlds—completely undetectable and unstoppable.



Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 5 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Entropy Drive (Astronautics)
- Evolving Intelligence (Electronics)
- Matter/Antimatter Annihilation Reactor (Astronautics)

Simulacrum Engine

Cloning technology has existed since before humanity first left a dying Earth. But though a clone can perfectly mimic the genetic makeup of an individual, it can't capture the thoughts, experiences, and personality of the original. Simulacrums, on the other hand, are far more than a mere copy of an individual's existing DNA. Using long-forgotten technology, *Simulacrum Engines*—a rare and highly prized piece of Remnant tech—can create exact duplicates of an individual, in both body and mind ... with certain crucial limitations.

There is speculation that the *Simulacrum Engine* was originally built as a radical solution to a problem associated with the *Auspex* prediction machine. In some cases, an individual using the *Auspex* would simply refuse to end their simulations, becoming trapped in a loop where they observed infinite scenarios in pursuit of the perfect future. Forcibly extracting these individuals from the *Auspex* often caused extreme mental damage, so an alternative solution was devised.

Taking a sample of DNA from the subject, the *Simulacrum Engine* can grow a perfect adult replica within a few months. This replica, however, has no thoughts, memories, or experiences—it is a mental tabula rasa. A personality can be written onto this blank slate by extracting a small amount of the brain parasite virus the *Auspex* uses to facilitate its prediction algorithms. This virus is then injected into the simulacrum's skull. Over the next few days, it rapidly spreads through the brain, replicating the personality and memories of the original source.

Typically, the brain parasite is "edited" before being implanted in the simulacrum to remove the infinite realities the original host has experienced in the *Auspex*. This prevents the simulacrum's consciousness from being overwhelmed, leaving only memories of the most relevant simulations—those that worked, and those that failed miserably, so the simulacrum understands what not to do. At this stage, the simulacrum is effectively an identical physical and mental copy of the individual trapped inside the *Auspex* loop. The simulacrum is free to continue with life while the original body remains trapped in the prediction machine until it eventually passes away due to old age.

However, as amazing as the technology is, the copies aren't perfect ... inevitably there are minor flaws or

errors that are transcribed in the replication process. As a result, simulacrums tend to age much faster than "real" humans or Celestials, and they are more prone to mental degeneration or even insanity. For this reason, it is common for multiple simulacrums to be spawned from the original host over the course of many years. Each copy sustains itself only for a short time—maybe a decade if the will of the original host is strong—before breaking down and requiring a new copy to be created.

While the original purpose of the *Simulacrum Engine* was to enhance the usefulness of the *Auspex*, the implications of creating perfect copies of oneself were quickly seized upon for other purposes. Ego-driven individuals realized they could create simulacrums without using the *Auspex*, provided they maintained a living colony of the brain parasites to facilitate the mental transfer. This allowed powerful leaders to churn out "aides" who shared their exact beliefs and attitudes. The assumption was that these copies would be completely loyal to their creator, but that was seldom the case. While simulacrums are aware that they aren't the original versions of themselves, they have a strong sense of autonomy and independence, and most refuse to allow themselves to be servants of their "parent". And once they begin forming their own experiences and memories, their personality subtly—or not so subtly—evolves and changes.

Others tried to use the *Simulacrum Engines* as a way to capture immortality, particularly if they suffered from a degenerative disease. By creating "fresh" bodies, they hoped to remain young and healthy forever, copying their physical shell, putting it into cryogenic stasis, then implanting the brain parasite at a later date when their original body failed. However, there are problems with this method. Simulacrums are inherently less stable than a natural body; the mental and physical degenerations all living beings experience over time are rapidly accelerated. To effectively extend the life and consciousness of the original host, it is inevitable that they eventually start making simulacrums spawned from simulacrums. But these "copies of copies" only accentuate the flaws, and there is a rapid function of diminishing returns.

Ultimately, most have come to view this reproduction as a tool utilized only by the reckless, desperate, or insane—a dangerous technology that is best left untouched.



Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 4 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Cellular Morph (Medicine)
- Cellular Reincarnation (Medicine)
- Uranic Gene (Genetics)

Slow Chair

Remnant tech is dangerous. Often because it's built to be so—there are whole wars strewn in pieces across the worlds of the Cluster, just waiting for some fool to push the wrong button or open the wrong door. The *Slow Chair* is one such Remnant.

The part of a *Slow Chair* that performs the magic trick is approximately the size of a human forearm, a cylinder that contains ... particles. A specific cocktail of subatomic particles held in an arrangement that could surely never arise naturally in regular space-time. The rest of the *Slow Chair*, the humanoid-suitable seat and the room-sized machinery around it, is really only present as a safety measure. It doesn't do the magic. Instead, by dint of considerable feats of calculation and colossal power expenditure, the surrounding frame acts as a stabilizer. One of the earliest explorers to discover and experiment with a *Slow Chair*—before their demise—referred to the device as a Slower-Than-Light-Drive. The nickname, however inaccurate, has stuck, and isn't really any less appropriate than the term "Slow Chair" that most Remnant researchers use today.

A *Slow Chair*, then, is perhaps best thought of as a "reverse relativity" device. Much as, to the crew of a ship traveling up against the speed of light, little time passes relative to those moving more slowly upon a planet—save in reverse. To enter a properly functioning *Slow Chair* is to experience extended periods of time while, outside, the sands in the glass barely shift. There have been reams of learned speculation written about flattening the background contours of space-time and the like, to try and account for the effect. The theory being that time is an artifact of gravity, and therefore some antithetical a-gravitic force holding sway within the chair's chamber affects the flow of time as if everything else in the universe was moving far closer to the speed of light than the occupant.

The stabilizer, by the way, somehow anchors the *Slow Chair*—or rather, unanchors it. Without a stabilizer the chair remains absolutely stationary, if such a concept even has any meaning in our mobile universe. "Absolutely stationary" might not sound like a problem until you recall that everything in the universe moves—planets, suns, solar systems, galaxies. To be stationary means being instantly left behind as the

whole of creation whirls away into space at breakneck speeds. Don't ask what it's stationary in relation to. The answer isn't known and the very idea has upset a great many physicists.

Nobody knows what *Slow Chairs* were originally for. As noted, if you take the brakes off, they can certainly take you through the universe at a gallop, but not in a way that would be very useful to any sane Traveler. The technology involved seems somewhat extreme just to grant some Celestial philosopher a secluded study to finish their reading list. Similarly, if you receive an unpleasant surprise and need to formulate the perfect plan under great pressure of time, by all means jump into a *Slow Chair*. If one happens to be present. They aren't exactly portable. Perhaps the dourest use anyone found for the things is to install some shackles and use them as a relativistic prison, the opportunity to inflict a lengthy custodial sentence on enemies.

There are some who think that there is some third party, some unthinkable entity, that exists in the slowed frame of reference that the chairs generate, that can be communicated with. Some ponderous thing that all the other things of the material universe are just gnats to. Just exactly the sort of nonsense and fables that the more mystifying Remnant technology tends to breed. Some human civilizations with lower levels of technological development have discovered practical uses for the *Slow Chair*, especially in scientific fields requiring extended timeframes. This device allows them to conduct long-term studies, such as measuring the half-life of newly discovered radioactive particles, assessing the durability of ultrabonded materials, observing the evolution of genetically modified microorganisms, and even studying slow-burn computer viruses designed to infiltrate systems gradually over decades. The *Slow Chair* has become a vital tool, enabling research that would otherwise span beyond a single lifetime.

That said, *Slow Chairs* can also kill you in just as many ways as more mundane Remnant tech. Time doesn't stop for the occupant, although the support machinery usually includes scrubbers to refresh the atmosphere and to replenish liquids and synthesize foods. But long periods of utter solitude can lead to madness and failed stabilizers can fling the device and its user forever into the void—or see everything else flung away, technically, but the effect is the same.

Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 4 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Entropy Drive (Astronautics)
- Immersive Simulated Reality (Electronics)

00
YEARS

Tectonic Seeds

It's clear that, back in the mists of time, the Centauri Cluster played host to some civilizations of truly horrifying power and ingenuity. One such produced the first *Tectonic Seeds*, another device that the Elohim have been known to take an interest in because of its planet-scale destructive potential. The worst of it is that the seeds aren't even weapons.

A *Tectonic Seed* is a dark crystalline spindle a little over three feet end to end, dense enough to weigh over a ton. They have no obvious interface point, and plenty of seeds have been uncovered and discarded as inconveniently heavy mineral deposits of no obvious function. They have quite a range of possible uses, however, many of them entirely benign. But only if you know what you're doing. To instruct a *Tectonic Seed* requires a complex series of subsonic pulses—sequences lasting several days in many cases. These interact with a fluid internal layer, converting the vibrations into coded instructions to guide the seed in its later activity. After that, deploying the seed is simplicity itself. Simply position your ship in orbit over your planet of choice and drop the thing into the gravity well.

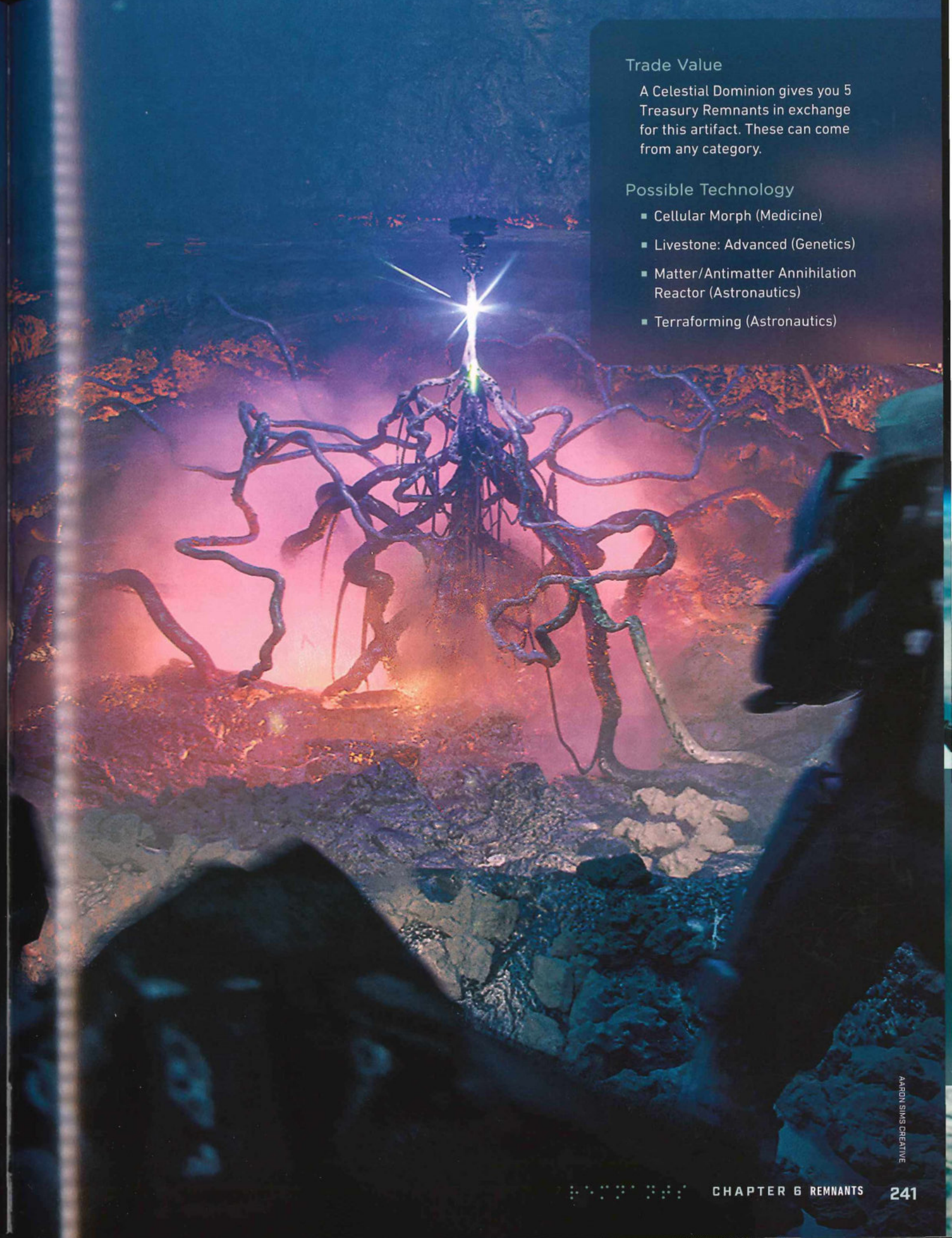
The streamlined shape of the *Tectonic Seed* means it hits the local terminal velocity very rapidly. Its outer construction is essentially heat-proof, and very little ablates off in its descent. The impact force is equivalent to a small meteorite, though with less debris cloud and collateral damage owing to the very narrowly focused strike point. Under most circumstances the seed ends up buried some way down in the planet's crust, but if low gravity or atmospheric conditions contrive to have it remain on the surface, its initial activity makes it tunnel into the earth, seeking geologically active layers.

Within a short period of time—years or decades depending on how unstable the local geology was to begin with—you can expect to see the sort of geological tumult that a planet normally stretches out across thousands or even millions of years. Volcanos erupt in great chains across the planet, tectonic plates scud over the world's surface like sailboats, mountain ranges rear up and chasms sunder the world. Weather

patterns change violently, seas boil away and reform. Depending on the precise sonic instructions given to the seed, the effects can be limited to one region or might rework the entire surface of the planet. Worlds without geological activity might have their cores ignited by nuclear chain creations and magnetospheres can be kindled out of nothing, shielding a planet from external radiation. Elements trapped in the rock can release a tailored atmosphere. Dead balls of rock birthing worlds suitable for life and just about the only planetary characteristic they can't alter is gravity.

How do they work? This is where the whole business becomes even nastier than you might think because people call them "seeds" advisedly. They are a bioengineered organism, and we should all be glad that whatever godlike civilization made them doesn't seem to have experimented further with the technology. Once delivered into the planet's crust the seed undergoes a vastly accelerated life cycle, consuming and transforming everything around it to grow into a vast and all-invasive root network infiltrating as far as the planet's very core. Feeding off the heat of the world and its own self-sustaining fusion reactions, it ignites and triggers geological events across its subject world, based on calculations designed to bring about the end result it was programmed for. Needless to say, small errors at the programming stage lead to massively warped results on the planet's surface. And did I say that the programming language the seeds respond to is, to put it mildly, imperfectly understood? *Tectonic Seeds* aren't toys for any fool to play with.

Proper and responsible use of a *Tectonic Seed* can save an ailing world and repurpose a dead one and there are some Celestial scientists who specialize in the practice. They tend to be unusually humble (for Celestials). They are very aware of the fire they play with. Even a few humans have made use of the seeds and not completely ruined their target planet. However, failed seeding attempts far exceed successes, and that's not even counting the times when someone doesn't even intend to fix things. Destroying a world with a *Tectonic Seed* is far too easy. You just need to feed it random instructions and then send it on down ...



Trade Value

A Celestial Dominion gives you 5 Treasury Remnants in exchange for this artifact. These can come from any category.

Possible Technology

- Cellular Morph (Medicine)
- Livestone: Advanced (Genetics)
- Matter/Antimatter Annihilation Reactor (Astronautics)
- Terraforming (Astronautics)



TECHNOLOGY

IMMUNOCAPIT





>>>> THERE ARE MANY TECHNOLOGIES AVAILABLE

across the Cluster that can have a dramatic impact on a human world. Since Celestial Dominions have little interest in creating competing societies, they rarely sell or trade these technologies to human colonies. Instead, it is up to Travelers to find Remnants that can be taken apart and studied to unlock these technologies.

Though it is by no means an exhaustive list, this chapter lists many of these technologies, grouped by technological rank. Each human or Celestial civilization is also graded using these same ranks. It is difficult for a civilization to use technology that is classified a step above the civilization's rank and impossible if the technology is more than a single step above.

Finally, even though a civilization has the potential to use a particular technology they may have chosen not to, either for moral reasons, lack of interest, or out of a sense of self-preservation, believing the technology is dangerous and could ultimately doom them.

RESEARCH

Taking apart Remnants to learn new technologies, as well as how early-stage and late-stage impacts and dangers are triggered, is detailed in the “Dissecting Remnants” section of chapter 10 in the Traveler’s Handbook. The technologies themselves are described in this chapter, and each description has the following sections:

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. The technology generally takes a few years to decipher and then a few more for it to have an effect on the civilization. Results can occur sooner depending on the capabilities of the technology's discoverers.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Over several decades or longer, a technology can have additional effects on society. These might be introduced earlier if the technology's discoverer is especially apt.

Early-Stage Danger. This is a danger, usually paired with the technology's early-stage impact. It occurs if those influencing the development of this technology overlook potential problems or do nothing to mitigate those problems.

Late-Stage Danger. Like early-stage dangers, except these are paired with the technology's late-stage impact.

Additional Prerequisites. Some technology requires additional precursor technology that must be learned before this new technology can benefit society.



TECHNOLOGY

COMPETENT TECHNOLOGY

C-Rank

SERGEI SARICHEV



>>>> THIS TECHNOLOGY LEVEL IMPLIES

that the population is mostly planet-bound (except for Travelers), with an average life expectancy less than 100 years. Power is generally supplied by fission nuclear reactors or other outdated forms of technology.

Humans under the rule of a Celestial Dominion are usually kept at a C-Rank technology level, except in a few instances where the Celestials don't deem a particular higher ranked technology a threat.

CELLULAR REINCARNATION

This technology staves off death for those who want to live longer. Organs are replaced, bones are reinforced, hormone therapy is performed, along with a variety of other procedures. Some people even opt to assume a different identity when undertaking this process, even changing gender, species, or both. This process can add centuries to a human lifespan, but eventually the brain tissue itself deteriorates to a point where death becomes inevitable.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. This technology leads to extending the lives of the world's greatest thinkers, politicians, and scientists. This allows for more scientific advances and most importantly it preserves holistic institutional knowledge and influence which leads to a long-lasting and stable society.

Early-Stage Danger. Due to the cost of this procedure, it is available only to the wealthy. This leads to an increasing stratification of society, with the wealthy living for centuries and dominating the world's resources. It might also allow powerful despotic politicians to extend their rule for centuries. Revolution is often the result.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The technology becomes ubiquitous across the world, allowing people of any social or financial background to reap the benefits.

Late-Stage Danger. Easy access to this procedure leads to overpopulation. This might be alleviated if there are other habitable worlds in the star system to colonize.



HE3 DAEDALUS BALLOON

A cheap and efficient method to mine helium-3 (He3) on gas giants with relatively stable atmospheres. These double walled balloons are buoyant in the hydrogen dense atmospheres of many gas giants. They are dropped into the atmosphere to collect vast amounts of He3 and then utilize single shot nuclear rockets to achieve orbit where they are picked up. Alternatively, tethers can be attached to orbital motherships, so that the He3 that is mined can be passed directly into orbit.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Once a civilization has access to He3 from its gas giants, it means that their starships can refuel their fusion (usually tokamak) reactors easily. Planet-bound reactors also have an abundant supply so that a world need not worry about losing their clean energy.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Technology has progressed to the point where starships can be equipped with their own He3 scoops. Balloons remain in use to gather He3 for shipment back to on-planet reactors.

Dangers. There are no known dangers of significance.

IMMERSIVE SIMULATED REALITY

This technology allows a user to experience simulated reality with all five senses in a manner that is almost indistinguishable from the real thing. This has many applications, from entertainment to facilitating the operation of remote machines, drones, and military equipment, to protecting the mental health of individuals in extreme environments, such as long duration space travel.



AARON SIMS CREATIVE

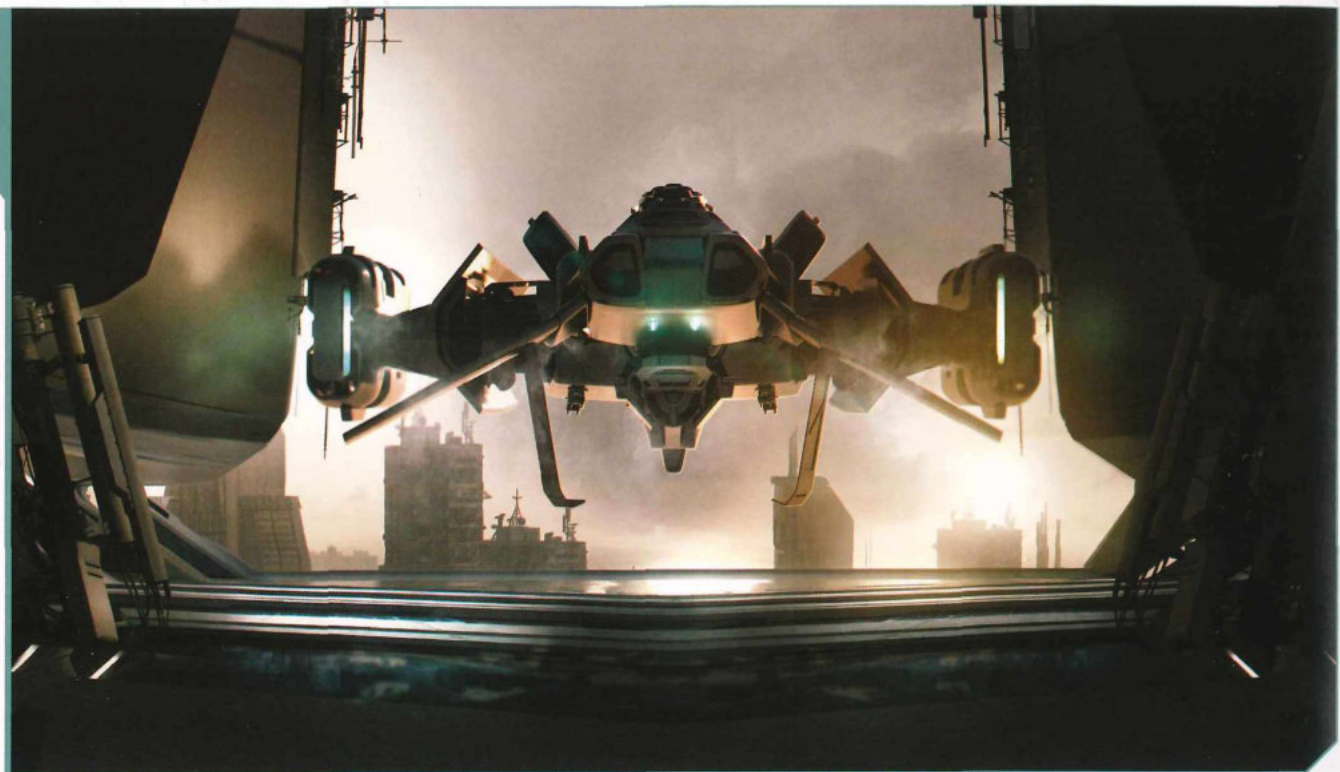


JULIAN CALLE

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. This has proven to be an effective method to prevent overcrowding from causing outbreaks of violence and crime. It also makes the colonization of a star system easier by decreasing the mental stress of extended interplanetary space travel.

Early-Stage Danger. The technology is addictive. When used too often, either by civilians for entertainment purposes or by military and industry personnel, consumers often retreat into their virtual worlds. Much like other addictions, this can lead to societal decay and even collapse.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The addictive aspect of the technology is understood well enough now that there are many remedies for those who become addicted to the experience.



JULIAN CALLE

METALLOCERAMIC

This material technology creates an alloy of metal and ceramic where the exact combinations provide the resultant material with the benefits of both and the detriments of neither. Though difficult to produce in a full gravity environment because the density difference makes an even molecular distribution challenging to achieve, mass production becomes economically viable in a low-gee environment. Metalloceramics are the most advanced material Centauri Cluster humans can create. The poor-man's ultrabonded material. (Like many of their advanced products, Celestials dislike trading ultrabonded materials to humans, and the science behind the production process isn't one human science can emulate yet.)

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Metalloceramics are mostly used in astroengineering for spaceship and spaceplane fuselages, though they also have considerable military applications. A civilization with access to this material can build resilient starship hulls.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The material tech has progressed to the point where Space Elevators (another technology) can now be built.

Dangers. There are no known dangers of significance.



REACTION MASS TANK: HE3

This specialized container contains a fluid for use in a rocket engine to provide fuel and boost thrust. In an ion rocket (drawing power direct from a tokamak) the fluid is heated to a highly ionized vapor, and accelerated further by magnetic fields, electrostatic grids, or electron or proton beam injection, passing through an induction field. Different methods of vapor acceleration are dependent on the type of craft the engine is in. For example, satellites require the low, but long duration (decades) exhaust of grid thrusters. Interplanetary drives require the high thrust of electron beam injection. He3 tanks are also used in a direct fusion drive such as an opened-ended tokamak. The post-fusion exhaust plasma first passes through an induction hoop to draw off electricity to power the fusion reaction, it then expands out through a magnetic nozzle.

These tanks are thermally stable; that is insulated, and temperature regulated so the fluid doesn't get hot enough to cause evaporation, creating excess pressure, or freezes so that it can't be pumped. Temperatures in space vary wildly in relation to distance to a star; with an almost equal variance on the spaceship itself depending on which part is in sunlight or shade. So, any tank must be equipped with heat exchangers to cope with both conditions. Spaceships usually perform a constant thermal roll during flight, so that sunlight striking the hull is distributed evenly over the course of a couple of hours.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact.

Reaction mass tanks are required if a civilization is to develop reliable interplanetary flight.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. After a civilization has Matter/Antimatter Annihilation Reactor technology, these reaction mass tanks are upgraded to use a solid with a high density like osmium, which requires a vaporization stage before reaching the annihilation chamber. This reduces the overall volume required for storage. Given that antimatter drives are predominantly used in warships, a smaller fuselage, presenting a smaller target, is tactically advantageous, and justifies the additional cost and complexity of using a solid-stored fuel.

Dangers. There are no known dangers of significance.



RECLAIMER

These devices range in size from an oven to a residential house. They are both disposal units and fabricators. Some are specialized for solids, liquids, or gasses, while others handle all three. Their purpose is simple: their intake port takes waste material (i.e. carbon dioxide, sewage, food, and technological scrap) and turns it into useable materials (i.e. oxygen, clean water, basic material solids).

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact.

These devices have a dramatic impact on the well-being of a world's environment. In addition, they are important in making long space journeys possible and are critical to the operation of space stations, asteroid bases, and the like that have limited resources.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact.

These devices are now the size of a backpack, thus allowing them to be used in a wider range of applications.

Dangers. There are no known dangers of significance.

Once a Traveler identifies a world that has Silicate eggs, locating and extracting more Silicates from the surface remains an arduous task. There's no technology that can detect Silicates from afar—instead, a Traveler must search a world as a prospector searches a stream bed for gold. This is referred to as mining Silicates.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. A world that has access to hundreds or even thousands of Silicate eggs can develop in many different ways. The Traveler Dynasty that found the eggs might decide to keep them for themselves or they might donate them to governments or individuals on their homeworld. Regardless, a human world that has such a treasure is much better equipped at defending itself against the depredations of Celestial raiders such as Mara Yama.

Early-Stage Danger. A human civilization where Silicate bonding is common adds an element of fear to the general disdain that Celestials already have for humans. No present-day Celestial Dominion understands or can use Silicates; some even believe that Silicates are an extraterrestrial life form. This fear might turn into a desire to purge the human civilization of what many Celestials regard as a dangerous parasite.

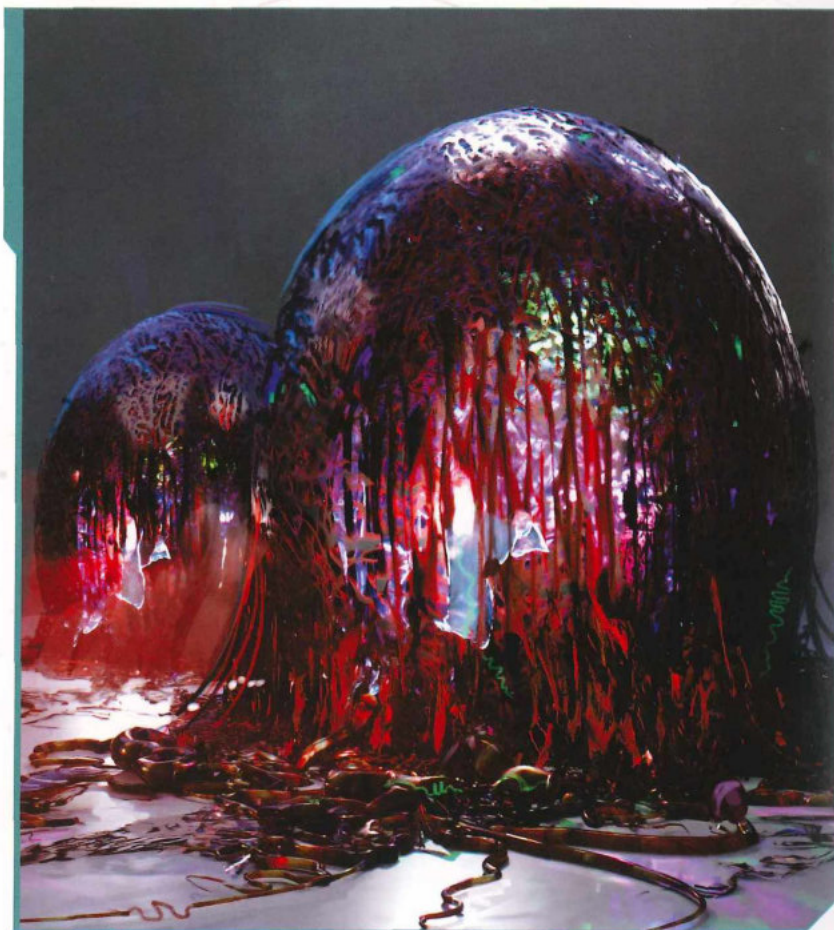
Even without the danger from Celestial Dominions, there is strife caused within human society itself. Those bonded with Silicates (commonly called Daemons), are often reluctant servants and rebellious soldiers and their presence in society increases conflict.

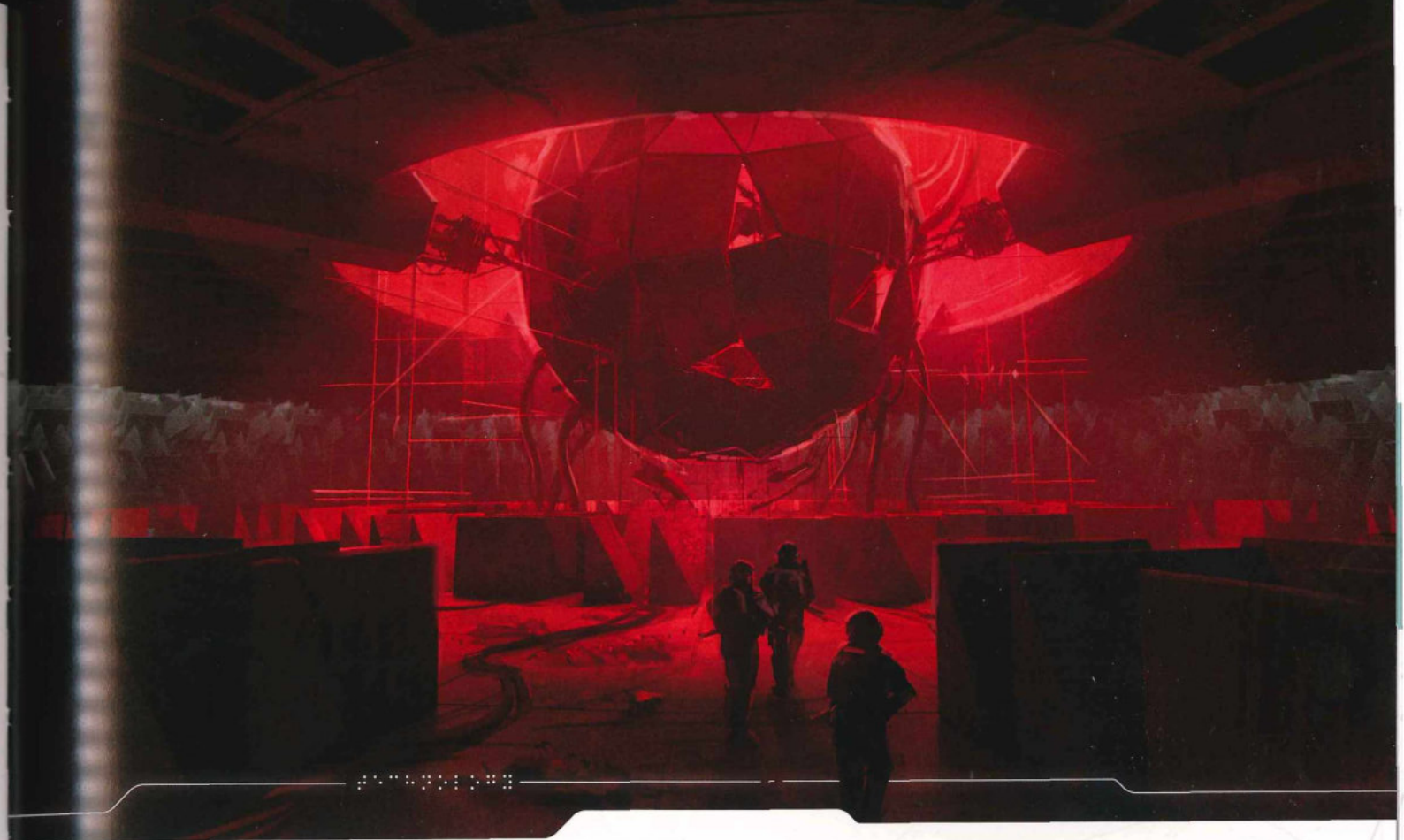
Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. None.

SILICATE MINING

Travelers recognize the tremendous value Silicates possess in the struggle for human self-determination. Humans will never be—can't be, in order to remain human—equal to Celestials physically or mentally; Silicates are one means of leveling the playing field. Thus, Travelers often seek out sources for Silicates.

Silicates are either salvaged from long-dead previous owners or found as “newly grown” eggs. These eggs exist inert and undamaged in most environments, but they are always discovered on planets almost—but not quite—habitable by human standards. These planets often contain violent storm systems, high gravity, high levels of background radiation, extreme temperature shifts, or a limited variety of simple life forms. Finding Silicate eggs on such a world is the discovery of a Traveler’s career.





SUBLIMINAL PRIMER

These devices are used to provide instruction to both children and adults. They are run by a Construct Intelligence manager that communicates using text, speech, and subliminal priming. Primers teach the basics of living in a technological society as well as specific technical knowledge. They are effective because the Construct Intelligence manager modifies its teaching methods according to the user's state of mind and environment. More importantly, the subliminal priming occurs both while the user is awake and asleep.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. These devices have been proven to be one of the most effective teaching methods that human civilizations have utilized. They can speed up civilization's technological advancement and advanced manufacturing capability.

Early-Stage Danger. This is also a technology easily turned towards indoctrination. This indoctrination might be used by a human government to keep its citizens loyal, or the programming might be subverted by a rival government of Celestial or human origin.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The technology has progressed to the point where it can also be used to keep a civilization's culture and institutional knowledge alive. Since this is one of the most significant ways that a civilization suffers decline, this benefit is of extreme importance, even if a civilization doesn't realize it.

TOKAMAK REACTOR

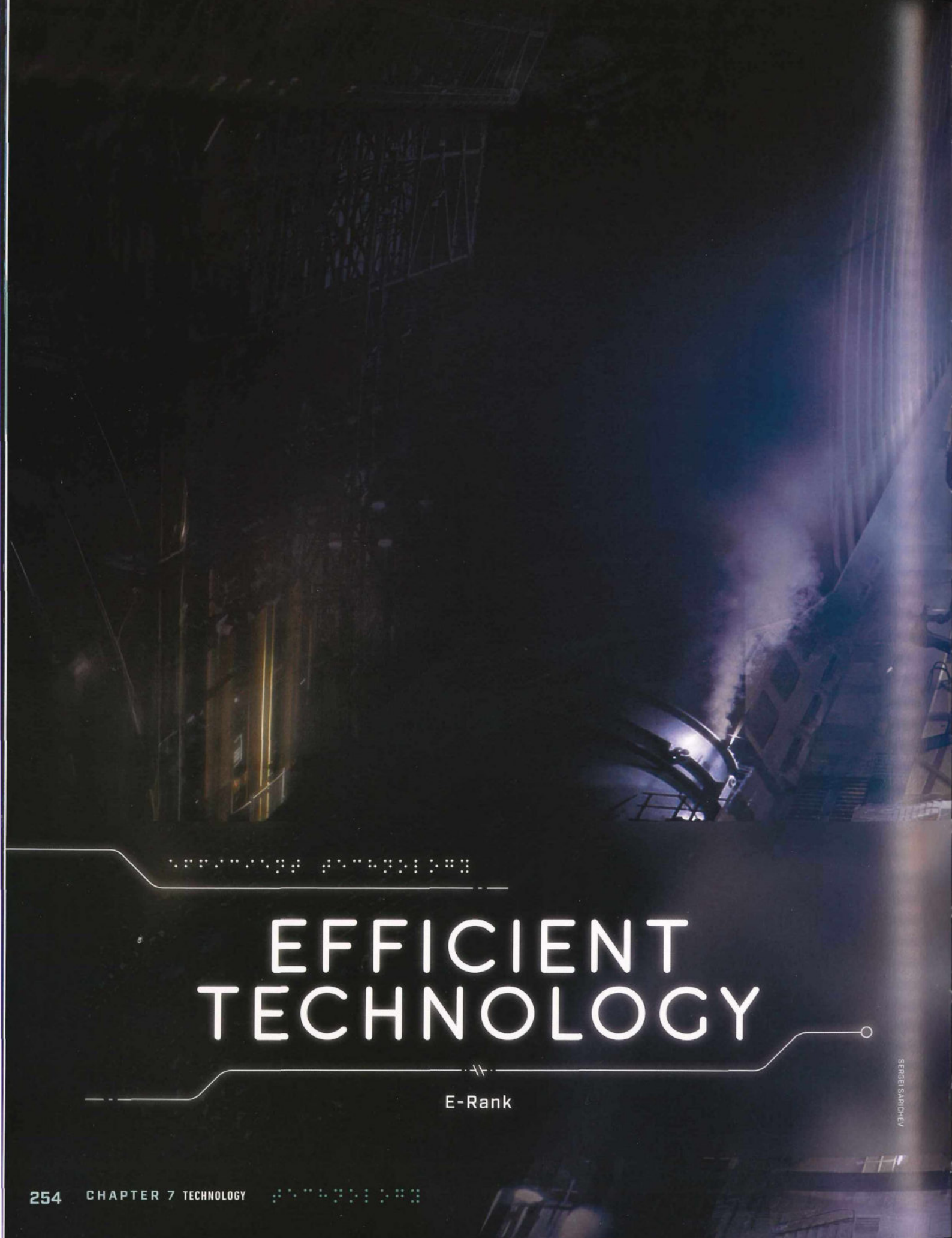
The tokamak is the most common method of producing controlled thermonuclear fusion power. It uses a magnetic field to confine plasma in the shape of a torus. While many human worlds have tokamak fusion plants, usually these have been taken from the arkships that brought them to their world. Most human colonies don't have the know-how needed to build new tokamaks, much less the compact tokamaks common on board Celestial interstellar ships.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. These reactors provide a world with limitless clean energy. In addition, they unlock the ability to construct starships capable of easily traversing all the worlds of a star system.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Smaller and more powerful tokamak reactors that make starships capable of longer distance journeys can now be manufactured.

Dangers. There are no known dangers of significance.

Additional Prerequisites. This technology requires He3 Daedalus Balloon technology to function efficiently.

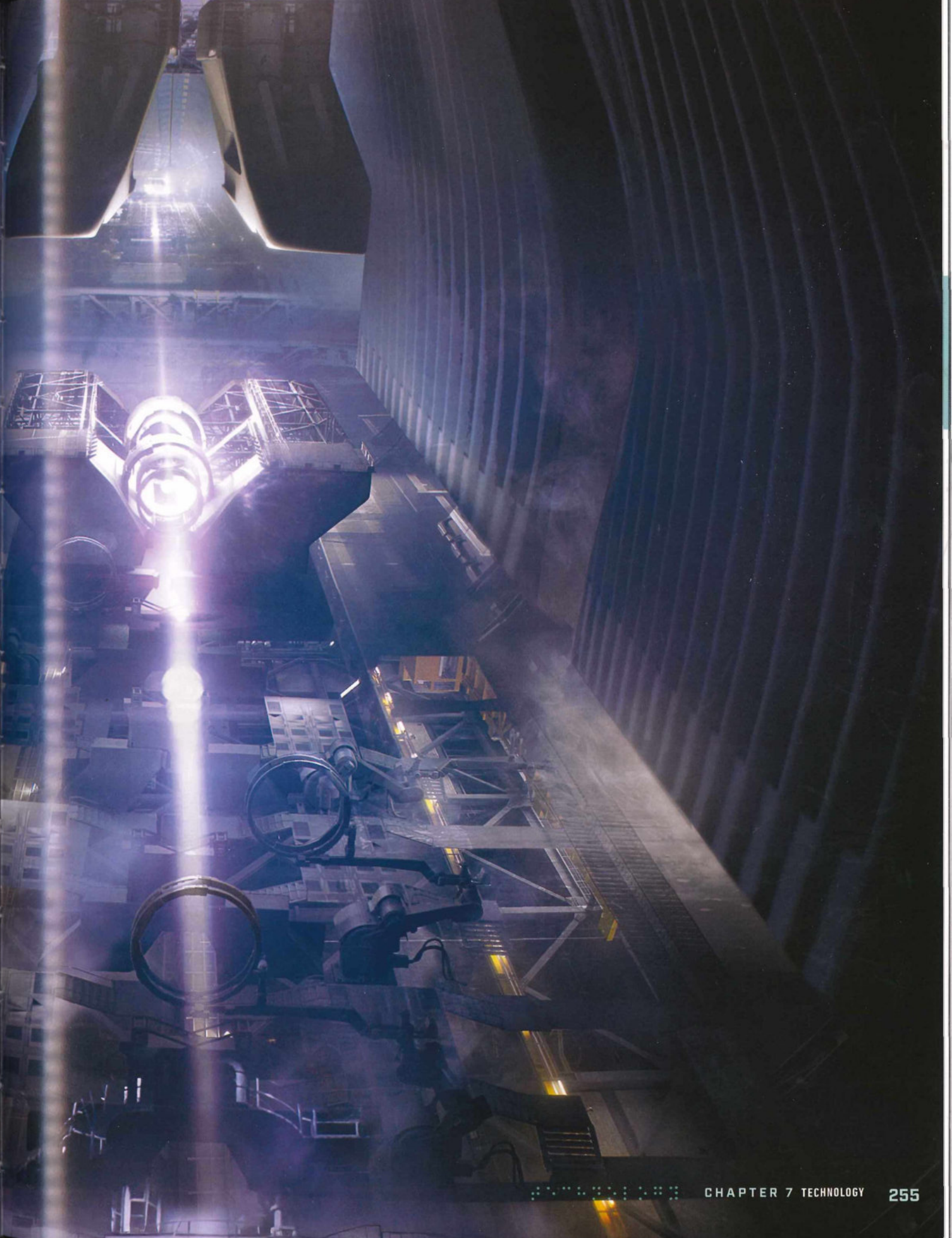


TECHNOLOGY

EFFICIENT TECHNOLOGY

E-Rank

SERGEI SARICHEV



>>>> **AT THIS TECHNOLOGY LEVEL, THE** civilization has access to interplanetary travel and life expectancy is usually in the range of 100-900 years. Cheap and clean power is readily available and likely supplied by fusion nuclear reactors.

ASSEMBLY GLOVE

This technology is derived from the Remnant relic known as *Ghost Gloves* and can create a similar item generally called "Assembly Gloves", modified so that neural induction isn't a requirement. *Assembly Gloves* are an extra set of limbs made from livestone, easily controlled by the wearer, and able to handle extremely heavy loads or perform very delicate procedures.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. This technology significantly enhances a world's heavy industries' capabilities including construction, automotive, and aerospace. The complexity and size of possible construction projects, whether buildings or starships, increases exponentially. The increase in the alacrity of construction projects is so significant that some would almost seem like magic (with buildings appearing overnight).

Travelers can now purchase *Assembly Gloves* (see the *Traveler's Handbook*) to use on Exodus.

Early-Stage Danger. There will always be accidents due to how this technology connects to a user's subconscious brain. For example, if a livestone virus were created that could pass easily between gloves, the possible destruction that would ensue could cause untold damage and permanently dampen the desire to use this technology.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The technology improves to the point where it can be used for advanced military applications.

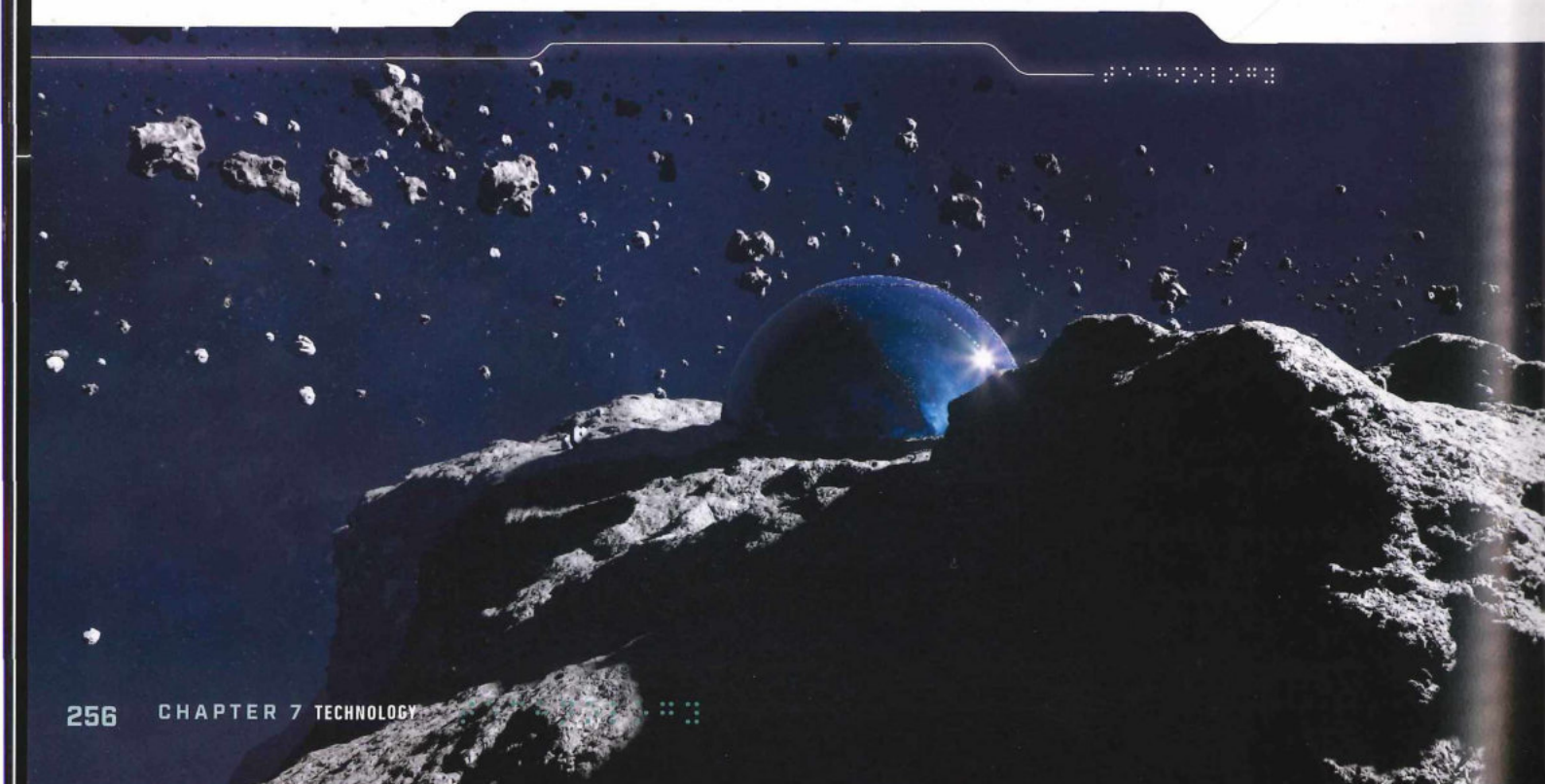
Additional Prerequisites. This technology requires Livestone: Basic technology.

BIOMINING

Once Biomining technology is available, asteroids are seeded with genetically tailored spores, which bloom across the asteroid's surface in a web of living threads (symbiotic rhizomorphs), which then start to eat into the regolith. Visually, it looks as though the asteroid has been colonized by fungi in the same way as a dead tree trunk. Over time specific microorganisms in the threads leach the metals, minerals, and rare earth elements directly from rock, and deposit the fines in woody-textured sacs around the outside of the asteroid. Residual rock in the form of fine dust is discharged through pores in the external threads, showing up like a comet's tail as the solar wind pushes it away. The efficiency of the process is dependent on how close the asteroid is to its star, and so how much light-energy it receives. For more information refer to the "Biomined Asteroids" section in *Exodus: Chronicles of Melayu*.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. This is a cheap, fire and forget, form of mining that can cause exponential growth for a civilization. But this requires centuries to come to fruition. However, many Celestial civilizations made the jump to Dominion status only after they reaped the rewards of long gestating biomined asteroids.

AARON SIMS CREATIVE



Dangers. There are no known dangers of significance.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Manufacturing these items is now possible, and they are readily available to all levels of society.

Dangers. There are no known dangers of significance.

Though Celestial equipment is exponentially more advanced than human equipment, the technology that powers advanced Celestial augments can be harnessed and integrated into Aegis suits. By taking advantage of unfamiliar technology via extrapolation—determining its purpose and how to activate it, based on the common-ground between Celestial and human physiology, these augments can then be applied to human suits. (Humans are always ingenious, especially when our survival is threatened.)

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Instead of merely adapting existing items for use by humans, these augments can now be manufactured. This makes them more readily available to all levels of society.

Dangers. There are no known dangers of significance.

Some Celestial gear has seemingly been created for specific purposes of communication, computing (or digital sabotage), or reconnaissance. These items harness more advanced technologies than what is generally available to humans. Whether these devices were originally intended for the uses towards which humans apply them, is debatable. As with so much that is handed down to humans, no amount of reverse-engineering ever tells the full story behind why such gear has been manufactured.

Celestial weaponry uses more advanced technologies, generally revolving around unique ammunition systems or modes of operation unfamiliar to humans—perhaps even unfathomable to humans. Yet finding new means to express violent intent is an essential component of the human experience and so Celestial weaponry in all its forms is much coveted.

Early-Stage Danger. These weapons can have a destabilizing effect on a civilization if they become commonplace. Their destructive potential far outstrips human weaponry.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Production of these weapons has become streamlined so that all members of the military and perhaps law enforcement now have access to them.

Celestials have created a variety of weapons that are uniquely designed to cause significant destruction, even if they can't be classified overtly as weapons of mass-destruction. Whether developed to quickly quell an internal dispute or for use maintaining control over a disagreeable Changeling population, is irrelevant. These are powerful weapons and understanding the technology underlying their capabilities has far reaching benefits for a fledgling society.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. All Travelers can now purchase from the Celestial Special Weaponry table in the *Traveler's Handbook*.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Production of these weapons has become streamlined so that all members of the military and perhaps law enforcement now have access to them.

Late-Stage Danger. These weapons can have a destabilizing effect on a civilization if they become commonplace. Their destructive potential far outstrips human weaponry.



EVOLVING INTELLIGENCE

This is a Construct Intelligence manager designed to evolve continuously in reaction to the environment it has been placed in. This ranges from optimizing a starship's potential to maximum efficiency (and then going beyond as the intelligence learns more) or, if given access to satellites instead, to developing a planetary computer network exponentially more efficient. This technology improves everything from traffic management to economic development and promotes knowledge sharing, thereby accelerating the pace of scientific discovery.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. This is a huge boon to information industries and scientific research. Beyond that, almost every industry improves their efficiency from such an evolving network. These efficiencies continue to grow over time.

Early-Stage Danger. While there are many safeguards against a Construct Intelligence manager purposefully harming humans or Celestials, it still inadvertently causes problems. A starship might shoot first when its crew might have preferred to negotiate or the Construct Intelligence creates a world so saturated with information and easy answers that it leads to homogeneity and stagnation.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Most initial growing pains brought about by the spread of this technology has been mitigated. Though some industries suffered job losses owing to automation during the early-stage, the advanced intelligence itself has now been so thoroughly integrated that it discovers new avenues of research, development, and advancement to keep humans employed and productive. If allowed to function unimpeded, society itself runs more smoothly and much of the stratification seen in earlier societies is gone.

LIVESTONE: BASIC

Livestone is a patch of stone that grows slowly in the ground but is receptive to manipulation. To shape the livestone into a specific shape, image, or architecture, someone with neural induction or an appropriate technological facsimile lays their hands on the stone and simply pictures the shape or architecture they desire. Livestone permits architecture on a monumental scale to become commonplace.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Once a human civilization has access to livestone it gains the ability to grow structures without the many sectors of industry usually required or the natural resources needed. This leads to a cleaner environment.



Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. None.

Late-Stage Danger. The introduction of livestone erases entire industries including residential, industrial, and infrastructure construction, and many of the industries that are a part of their supply chains. This often leaves large percentages of the population purposeless and dissatisfied. It also heightens tensions between the jobless and those responsible for destroying their livelihoods.

PHARMACEUTIC TATTOO

This technology is similar to that used to create the famed Constellations of the Travelers but while Constellations are used for information storage these tattoos store and apply pharmaceuticals according to outside stimuli or the tattoo owner touching the appropriate design. The list of pharmaceuticals that someone can have inked on to their body is usually restricted only by cost. They include:

- Mood and sensory-altering substances (non-addictive).
- Chemicals to sharpen mental processes.
- Pain deadening substances (non-addictive).
- Substances to provide control of autonomic processes.
- Antitoxins, antibodies, vaccines, etc.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Beyond its military applications, pharmaceutic tattoos lead to a much happier and stable society.

Early-Stage Danger. This technology can easily be altered to make the mood altering and pain deadening aspects exceptionally addictive and spread through a virus embedded in the tattoos.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The technology has evolved enough that there are many safety measures to ensure no one can introduce a virus to corrupt the tattoo tech.

Late-Stage Danger. Eventually this technology leads to the creation of the *Maestro's Tattoo*. This powerful and addicting tattoo technology can easily supplant all other illicit and harmful drugs on a world. Someone able to manufacture these *Maestro Tattoos* could, effectively, take control of an entire world.

RECONSTRUCTIVE FOUNDRY

These foundries are about the size of a multi car garage. They can retrofit mechanical structures if the original specification is known. They reconstruct with an awe-inspiring alacrity and efficiency.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. A world with this technology is one with no waste material and usually a healthy unpolluted environment. Foundries also lead to increased innovation when expensive items such as vehicles no longer need to be purchased regularly to replace older models no longer serviceable.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The technology has improved so that a foundry is now about the size of an oven and easily installed on spaceships thus improving repair times exponentially.

Late-Stage Danger. This can lead to significant disruption to a civilization's manufacturing industries including automotive, aerospace, and steel-making. These industries often fight back against foundries with advertising campaigns, political interference, or worse, protesting the losses that occur after customers no longer need to regularly replace their highest cost items.

SPACE ELEVATOR

This basic space elevator consists of a cable anchored to the surface near the equator and the other end attached to an asteroid counterweight in space beyond geostationary orbit.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Space elevators drastically cut down on the cost and difficulty of sending materials into orbit, speeding up the construction of satellites, space towers, and other structures. They also allow probes and ships to be launched into deep space without the use of traditional large rockets. Their impact on a civilization's economy can't be overstated.

Early-Stage Danger. A space elevator is a sure way to attract the attention of a neighboring Celestial Dominion. They are also a prime target for sabotage and cause untold damage if they crash to the planet's surface.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The strength of the cable increases to the point where it can simultaneously run three elevators, thus tripling traffic.

Additional Prerequisites. This technology requires Metalloceramic technology.

TERRAFORMING

This technology allows for basic terraforming to be used on worlds with near-perfect conditions: Earth-sized planets with former atmospheres such as Mars or many Remnant worlds. The process is slow and takes millennia.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Terraforming technology allows a civilization to expand to new worlds where conditions are optimal for human life. If the timing is right, terraforming technology can be the salvation of a civilization trapped on a dying world.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. Like basic terraforming technology, advanced terraforming allows civilizations to expand to new worlds—but at a much faster rate (centuries rather than millennia). It also allows for a broader range of terraforming candidates, making it ideal for a civilization in a system with limited options.

Late-Stage Danger. If terraforming technology fails or becomes corrupted it can have devastating environmental effects, resulting in earthquakes, toxic atmospheric conditions, and other natural disasters.





INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

I-Rank

SERGEI SARCHEV



>>> CIVILIZATIONS WITH THIS LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY HAVE ACCESS

>>> **CIVILIZATIONS WITH THIS LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY HAVE ACCESS**
 to interstellar travel and have a life expectancy that exceeds a thousand
 years. Power is often supplied by antimatter reactors.

ANTIMATTER SOLAR FARM

Celestials use solar farms in a close orbit around stars to produce antimatter for their spaceships but even with their technological prowess it requires huge amounts of energy to generate antimatter. The ratio of energy applied to the production machinery compared to the energy contained within the antimatter it refines is extremely poor.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Antimatter engines are required to power warships capable of competing against Celestial Dominion fleets. Access to a continuous fuel source is needed to fuel those engines, so these solar farms enable larger and more far-ranging fleets.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. None.

Late-Stage Danger. This technology is often the last step in becoming a serious threat to nearby Celestial Dominions. Those Dominions might decide to preemptively end that threat.

CELLULAR MORPH

Instead of just replacing organs, Cellular Morph technology creates specialized “tanks” that facilitate total realignment of existing cells; a full-body modification. Celestials, especially the Mara Yama, are known to have mastered this regeneration process, allowing them to adapt to various environments by strengthening limbs and organs.

Basically, Cellular Morph technology transforms a Celestial or human body so it can cope with extreme environments. It isn't possible to change basic biochemistry with its oxygen breathing lungs, nor can the process change the overall size or mass of a body. But a Celestial or human expedition could use a cellular morph tank to better cope with an extreme world. For example, to prepare for a hot, high-gravity world, a cellular morph tank would transform its recipient by making their body squat, strengthening their musculature, and growing coolant fins along their spine (similar to a dolphin) to act as radiators, dumping body heat brought there in the blood.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Cellular Morph technology facilitates exploration and expansion into worlds otherwise hostile to humans. The process requires multiple treatments over many years and so must be done before a journey to dangerous environments.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The technology is now at the level of the Mara Yama, so that it takes only months for a transformation. This means that Travelers can use a cellular morph tank during an Exodus to modify themselves before venturing into strange and unwelcoming environments.

Late-Stage Danger. The Mara Yama don't take kindly to a civilization using a technology that they developed expressly for themselves. If they were to learn of this, they might decide to stage a raid on the civilization and destroy it.



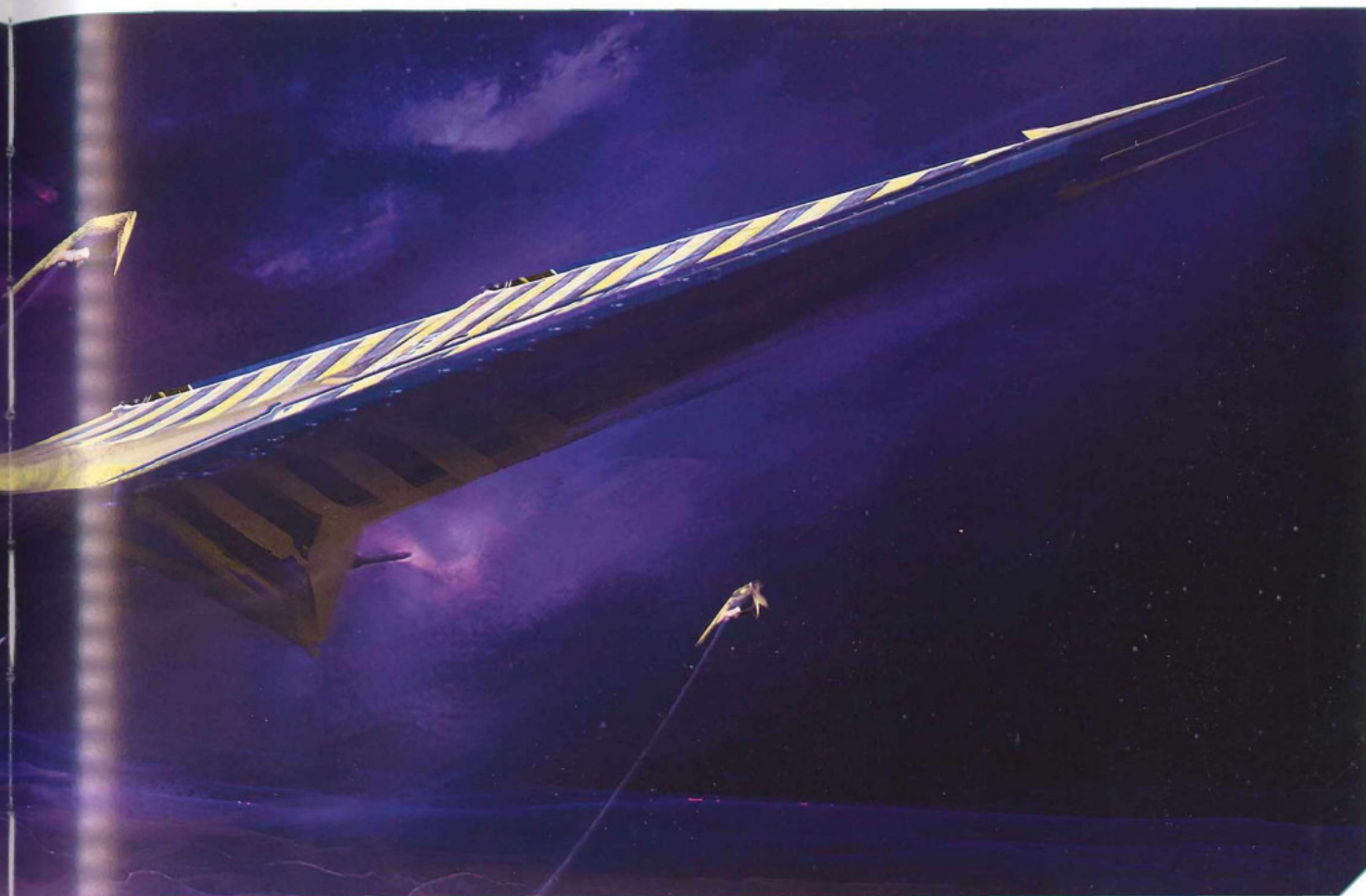
ENTROPY DRIVE

Entropy drives remain a technological wonder, even 40,000 years after their invention, the result of a civilization numbering more than 20 billion working toward a single goal: survive an imminent existential threat.

The drive's entropy field can engage with local dark energy fields, and syphon off their momentum. The faster the entropy drive is traveling, the more efficient it becomes, and the higher the acceleration it generates.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact.

While an entropy drive still needs the other technologies of an arkship to be useful, it is by far the most difficult technology to reengineer. The biggest impact that new arkships bring is the freedom for a civilization to settle previously inaccessible worlds or to leave the Cluster entirely.



Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. None.

Early and Late-Stage Dangers. Any use or attempted construction of an entropy drive might attract the attention of the Elohim. Not only would the Elohim cut off any use of nearby Gates of Heaven, but they would likely direct the closest Celestial Dominion to keep watch on the star system and stop anything from leaving it.

LIVESTONE: ADVANCED

This type of livestone is an advanced form that is more resilient than the basic form. While more difficult to produce it can exist in a variety of extreme environments—from the vacuum of space to the heat of atmospheric re-entry. This makes it perfect for the construction of starships or deep-sea vessels, but it is also useful in terrestrial vehicles and heavy machines.

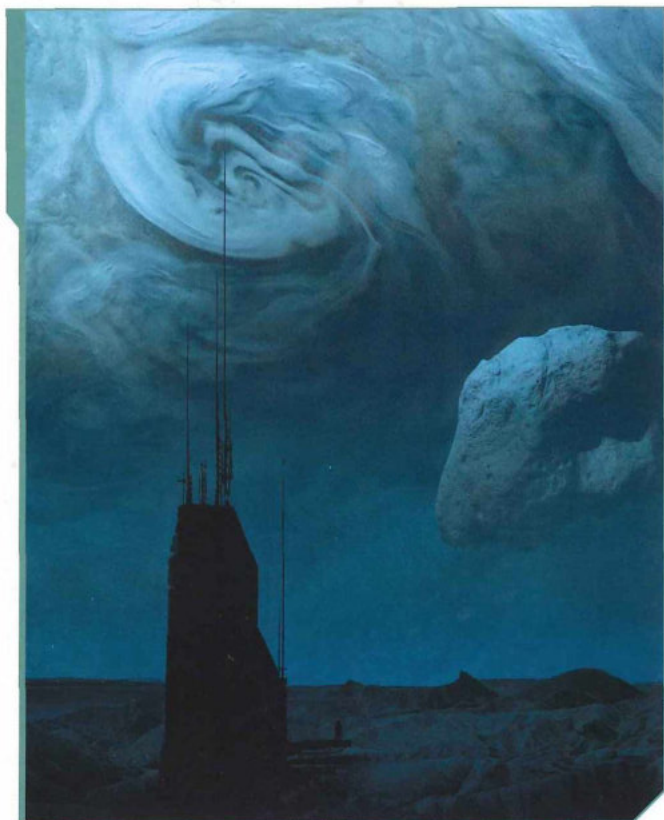
Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. A civilization can grow an exponential number of starship hulls compared to using standard construction methods. They can build vessels to explore extreme regions of their solar system. This often opens up the ability to extract resources that were previously inaccessible and possibly unlock other material technologies.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. A new form of synthetic semi-biological livestone with a composition like firm jelly is developed. It is color coded for function and is controlled by induction. It can create pharmaceutical processors or glands that extrude drugs of all kinds, building artificial muscle or organs, and creating neural processors, similar to sophisticated computers. This radically improves medical, electronics, and pharmaceutical industries, along with so many others. Computing technology also becomes more advanced and lifespans more than double.

Late-Stage Danger The introduction of this kind of livestone upends almost all a civilization's manufacturing industries including automotive, aerospace, steel, and more. This leads to similar problems as outlined under Livestone: Basic.

Ultimately, the biggest danger however is the attention that larger construction projects, like livestone starships, brings from Celestial Dominions.

Additional Prerequisites This technology requires Livestone: Basic and Uranic Gene technology.

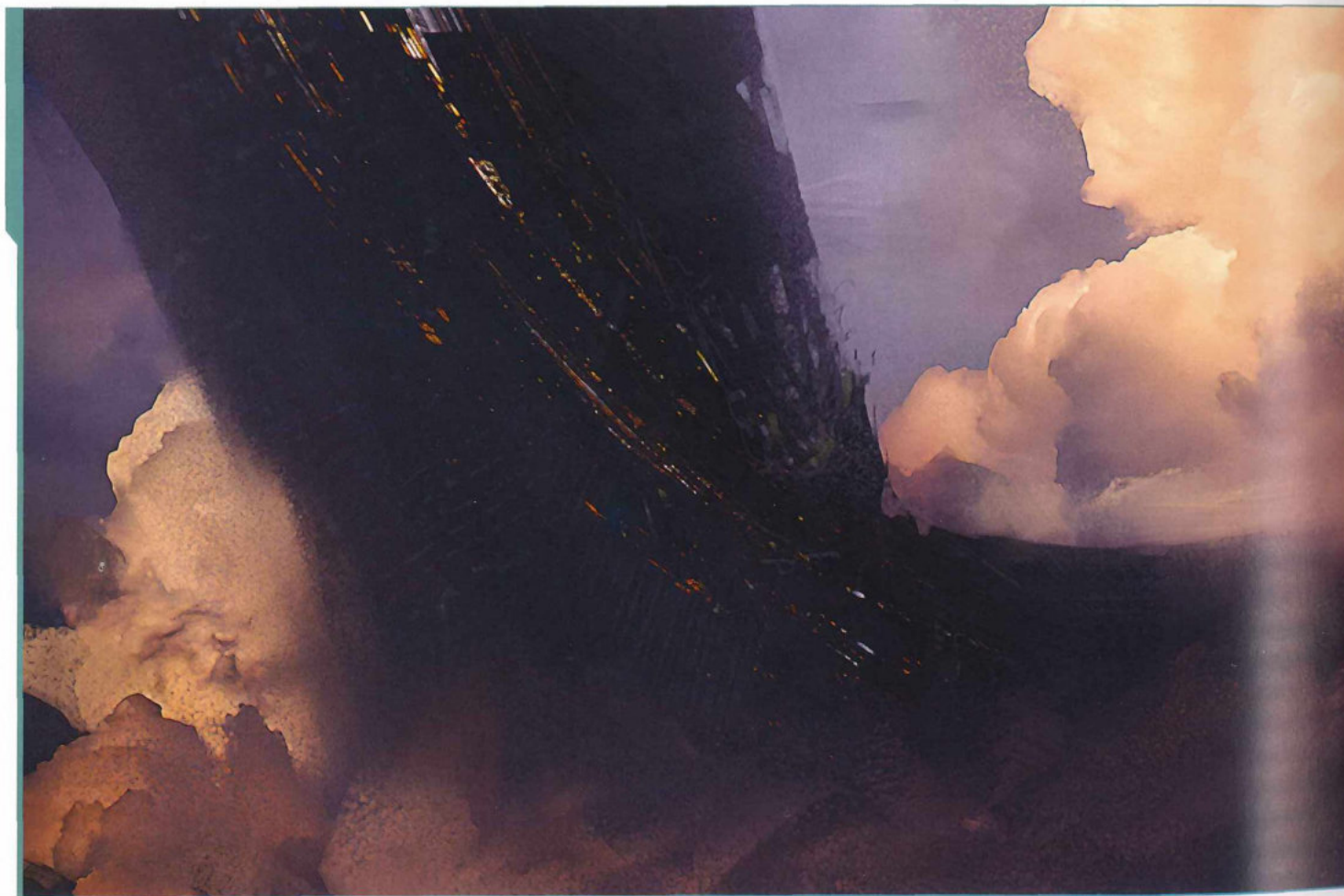


MATTER/ANTIMATTER ANNIHILATION REACTOR

When a matter particle collides with its corresponding antimatter particle, they annihilate each other as the energy in the two particles is carried away by two real photons to conserve energy. The same phenomenon occurs with all matter and antimatter because the forward moving time for the matter is cancelled, and the backward moving time is cancelled for the antimatter.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. These powerful reactors provide nearly limitless amounts of energy yet their overall cost effectiveness doesn't make this worthwhile. However, these large early reactors are required to get to the second, more efficient, late-stage of the technology.

Early-Stage Danger. As one might expect of something with the word "annihilation" in the title, accidents involving these reactors are nothing short of apocalyptic, possibly leading to a civilization ending accident if one were to fail on the surface of a world. In addition, these reactors draw attention from other Celestial Dominions as they are one of the technologies that announce the emergence of a new Dominion.



Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The reactors are now small enough that they can be placed in starships. Warships using these reactors can compete against the fleets of other Celestial Dominions.

Additional Prerequisites. This technology requires Antimatter Solar Farm technology to function efficiently.

SPACE TOWER

These are orbital towers that extend from the surface of a world to an asteroid anchor at the planet's L1 point.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. A space tower can support a dozen elevators and allows spacecraft to dock and unload their cargo without ever having to land on a planet's surface, saving a great deal of time and resources. Space towers dramatically improve a world's ability to participate in interstellar trade and travel, making them a huge boon to the economy.

Early-Stage Danger. Space Tower technology is one of the ways that a civilization announces that it is almost ready to compete in the Great Game of Celestial Dominions. Much like a space elevator, space towers are also a prime target for sabotage. However, the damage that a destroyed tower can cause to a world is more significant.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. The space tower evolves to a georing. A georing circles the planet between multiple space towers and their anchor asteroids. This allows a civilization to build habitats to support millions in addition to low-gee factories that have an enormous impact on a world's economic output.

Additional Prerequisites. This technology requires Space Elevator technology.

URANIC GENE

This gene gives humans the neural induction ability possessed by many Celestial species. Neural induction is a genetic modification that allows one to interface directly with advanced technologies and other organisms that have induction receptors. The induction capacity is centered in the palm of the hand: a pad of specialist neurons just under the skin with a thick bundle of nerves connecting it to the brain. Humans with this gene are referred to as uranic humans.

While neural induction is the pinnacle of Celestial technology, a human civilization can find a shortcut through the creation of a population of uranic humans. Uranic women always give birth to uranic children with a uranic father, but even when paired with a non-uranic father there remains a strong possibility that her offspring possesses neural induction.

Early-Stage Civilizational Impact. Once a human civilization has uranic humans it unlocks the ability to properly make use of a host of Celestial technologies previously unusable.

Late-Stage Civilizational Impact. None.

Late-Stage Danger. Those humans with neural induction are elevated in status. This leads to divisions in society. Uranic humans may be feared or even hated by other humans.



TRANSCENDED
TECHNOLOGY

T-Rank

JULIAN CALLE



>>>> THESE TECHNOLOGIES AREN'T

possible for a human or Celestial civilization to build. Only the Elohim possess this level of knowledge, and it is assumed any civilization at this level is essentially omnipotent, and presumed immortal.

ARCHIMEDES ENGINE

Archimedes Engines are among the most advanced constructs ever built in the Cluster. They are also one of the biggest; they are used to move planets after all. These constructs are saucer shaped and 15 miles in diameter. The core of an *Archimedes Engine* is a solid mountain of ultra-high-energy super-physics machinery, not dissimilar to a Gate of Heaven, and the surrounding structure is mostly hollow, giving the overall station a low density. This is important, for these engines are often used to move gas giants and must maintain a density lower than the gas giant's atmosphere in order to float.

Dozens of *Archimedes Engines* are required to move a terrestrial sized planet, but more than a thousand are required to move a gas giant. These engines are all linked by quintessence lines and a single quintessence line links them to an engine orbiting the system's star. All of this is done to facilitate the grandest momentum transfer the universe has ever seen. This transfer can be used in two ways, as a slingshot effect to accelerate the planet away into interstellar space; or as an anchor slowing the planet into a tighter closer orbit

The stations are powered by degenerate (collapsed) antimatter. Maintaining the quintessence lines under the strain of shifting a planet requires a phenomenal amount of energy. Fortunately, it's required only for a relatively short time, and the antimatter readily supplies that.

Since humans don't have the containment technology to handle degenerate matter, if Travelers try to scavenge some, they will have to take the whole containment system with them. The primary use would be as a super bomb. If a full containment system is switched off, then the antimatter explosion would be at a stellar-event level.

ZPZ GENERATOR

A zero-point zone stasis generator frames a starship in a stasis field that allows it to safely enter a Gate of Heaven and be accelerated close to lightspeed along a line of quintessence which connects to another Gate in a different star system. Once the acceleration phase is over, the field is switched off to allow the starship to proceed normally; it is then switched on again for the deceleration phase, when the starship emerges from the Gate.

These are manufactured by the Elohim and possibly a few exceptionally advanced Celestial Dominions. They are only made available to Celestials, a human can't buy one from a Celestial or the Elohim (even if they knew how to contact an Elohim). However, if a human Traveler ship shows up at a Gate of Heaven equipped with a ZPZ Generator the Elohim allow the ship through. To humans these generators are as close to magic as they will ever see; they are completely beyond human understanding. Luckily for Travelers their operation is entirely automatic, all the ship must do is supply it with power during the pathway engagement phase, and the pathway exit. This energy simply allows the ZPZ Generator to engage with the Gate and doesn't power the ship's acceleration. On approaching a Gate, the captain switches it to active status and the ZPZ Generator does the rest.



Given the enormous complexity of what it does, the ZPZ Generator must have a Construct Intelligence manager of amazing intellectual capacity, far beyond any other machine intelligence found in the Centauri Cluster. Traveler legend has it that this intelligence might be an aspect of the Elohim.

If a generator stops working no repair is possible, as humans simply don't know how the device works. Any attempt at analysis, or worse, breaking one open to see what's inside results in an explosion of several megatons. Only physical damage causes a generator to stop working, and it is hard to damage one because they are extremely tough machines. There is no instance of one breaking down because of an internal failure. ZPZ Generators recovered after 10,000 years entombed in a wreck simply work as if nothing has happened.

Every ZPZ Generator found in a Traveler ship has been salvaged from the wreckage of Celestial and Remnant ships. Given the number of space battles that have taken place in most systems between the Remnant and Crucible Eras, and the vast quantity of wrecked starship debris in eccentric orbits this has produced, the number of available ZPZ Generators is relatively large. Still, there is no artifact which is

more valuable to Traveler Dynasties. If the location of a wreck containing a ZPZ Generator becomes open knowledge, the competition to retrieve it is fierce, sometimes even resulting in battles between rival Dynasty starships.

ZPZ Generators do vary in size and ability, this is mainly down to the age of the unit. Ability in this sense means the size and mass of the starship able to be contained inside the zero-point zone; and the velocity able to be achieved when traveling down the line of quintessence. Modern ZPZ Generators, that is those built within the last 8,000 years, seem to have very few limits. Older ones tend to have smaller fields and accelerate the ship to a lower velocity. As Celestial starships tend to be considerably larger than Traveler ships, this is rarely a problem for humans.

Some uranic humans claim they can access the generator's systems; what they are actually doing is interfacing with the upper level of the integral Construction Intelligence, which allows them access to basic diagnostic data. A uranic who is talented at interfacing with Celestial routines can also determine the size of the field they generate, an essential piece of information when the Traveler ship is large.



APPENDIX A: HUMAN RELIGION

RELIGION

While religion isn't common amongst many Celestial Dominions, it remains a powerful force on human worlds and communities. There are too many religions within the Cluster to detail here, but most of the powerful terrestrial religions continue to thrive within the Cluster. This includes Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and more.

ASTERIA

Asteria is a legendary figure and an important part of many religions. The official human religion in the Crown Dominion is the Church of Asteria and they believe she is a goddess and that the Elohim are her angels. The Catholic and Cogniscience Churches consider her a saint whereas the Human Cosmos believe she is an angel sent by God.

While there are several different interpretations of who or what she was, all agree that she was the originator of the Green Worlds signal.

CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church remains the largest religious institution in the known cosmos that still holds to the Nicene Creed. During the Exodus and Dawn Eras, the Papacy decreed that the Great Commission should be carried out amongst the nations that would be created in distant systems. To ensure that the faithful would not be without guidance as they traveled the stars, the Pope addressed the inevitable difficulty of communication caused by the speed of light by blessing Emissaries to act on his behalf. Each Blessed Emissary carried a Holy Relic from the Vatican to confirm they were sanctified.

On worlds where Catholicism continues, Blessed Emissaries and the successors they name are regarded as the legitimate leaders of the Church. Most emulate the same structure of the mother Church on Earth, with the Blessed Emissary living in a Vatican—usually built where the first arkship to arrive on the world landed—and representing the final authority among the papal states of that world.



DANIEL HAHN

Perhaps as a result of the power and prestige afforded to the Blessed Emissary position, there has been a substantial proliferation of highly dubious Holy Relic artifacts since the arkships arrived. For example, the Centauri Cluster now has an impressive number of Shrouds of Turin scattered among human star systems. On settled worlds, the authentication of a Blessed Emissary is often subject to considerable skepticism.

There are only ten known worlds which have the Catholic Church serving as the planetary government; three of them are a very orthodox Catholicism, the Rightful Catholic chapter. The Emissaries of the Rightful Catholic chapter have prohibited all Celestial technology and regard Celestials themselves as heretical abominations for rejecting God's original image of Man. As utilizing Celestial technology is often the only way for humans to survive and thrive in the Centauri Cluster, this approach mostly proves unsustainable, and the Rightful Catholic chapter has remained a relatively small movement.

Even so, an undercurrent of Celestials no longer being the image of Man is prevalent among many Catholic movements in the Centauri Cluster. This added distrust and animosity towards Celestials contributes to the difficulty and discomfort of living in the Centauri Cluster—for humans. The Celestials simply don't care.

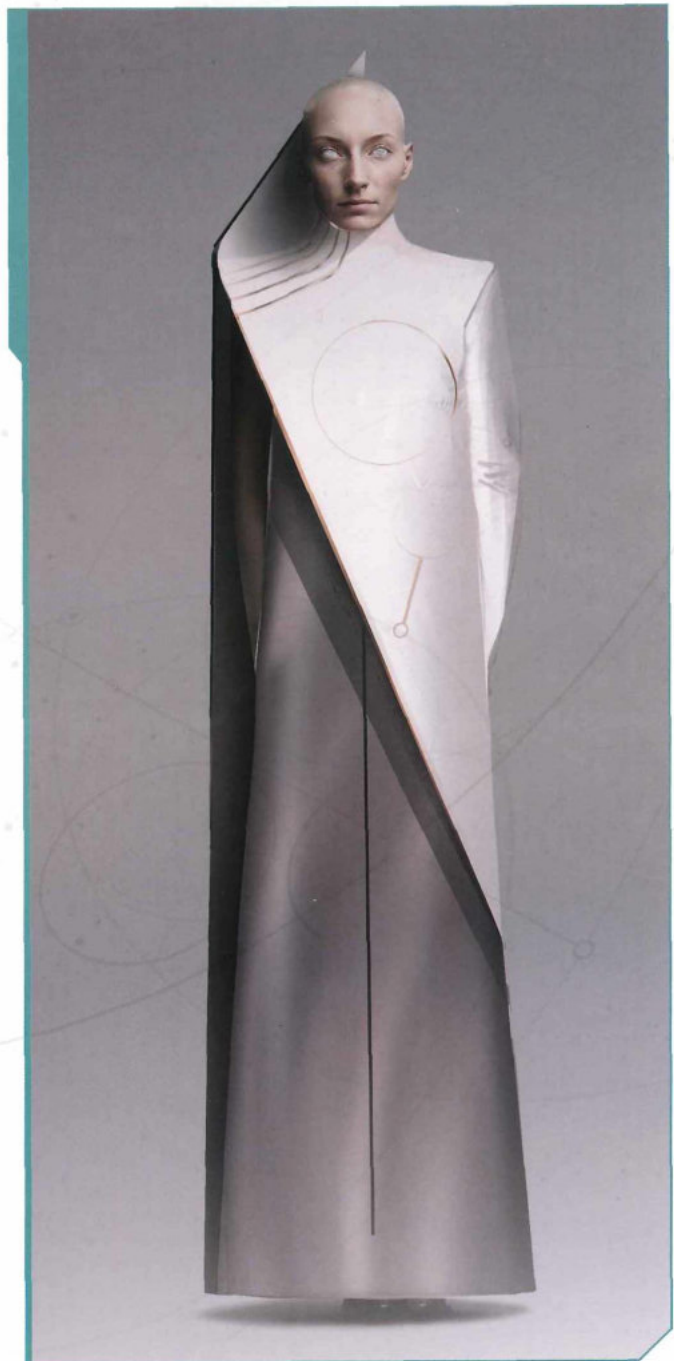
For a long time, Vatican City on Earth sent out a powerful omni-directional broadcast every ten years for the benefit of the Distant Faithful out among the stars, consisting mainly of Papal declarations. Although the content of the message meant little to non-Catholics the signal was always received with considerable interest and nostalgia on human settled worlds. The signal was a sign that people were still alive on Earth. Although the asteroid habitats had failed, the planet was still capable of supporting life.

The last signal to be detected was in 36,873 AD (the Crucible Era).

As is the nature of religion, Catholic populations tend to have a robust community spirit, which strengthens them in the face of the physical hardships that their barely habitable planets inflict. In many cases this solidarity and cooperation has allowed predominately Catholic societies to expand and prosper where earlier attempts to settle by more divisive, internally competitive societies, repeatedly failed.

COGNISCIENCE

During the early 23rd century, Earth faced an environmental crisis threatening humanity's survival. While governments enacted legislation and sought technological solutions, a growing faction pushed for a radical alternative—a mass exodus aboard arkships to colonize new worlds. Out of this movement, a new religion called Cogniscience was born, sparked by astronaut Samuel Ling's extraordinary experience. During a prototype entropy drive flight, Ling claimed to have encountered God in slip-time. This transformative moment turned him from a staunch atheist into a prophet, igniting the rise of Cogniscience.

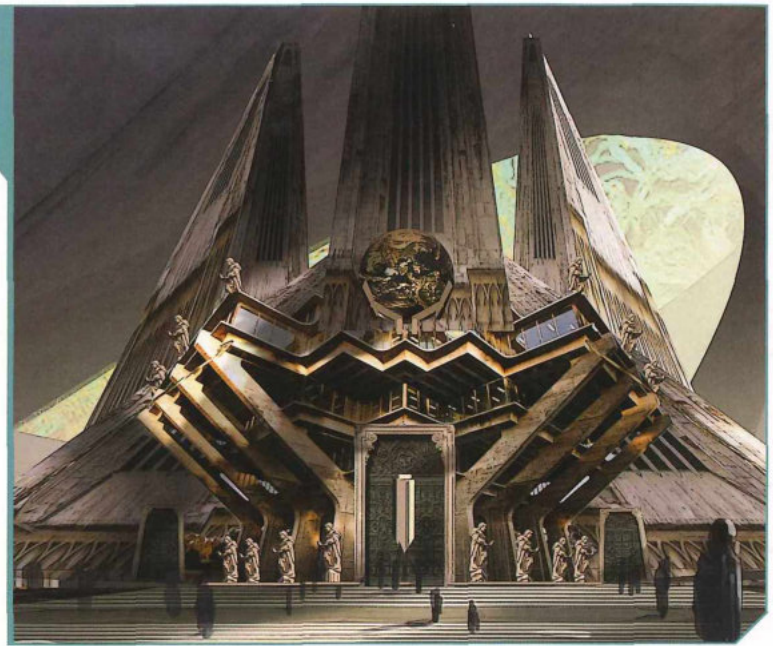


The religion's rapid expansion was due in part to Ling's wife, Dr. Eli Osmor, an esteemed geneticist. A decade after Ling's revelation, she presented Androcles, the world's first Awakened lion. This scientific marvel was seen as divine confirmation of Ling's vision and sparked widespread interest, particularly among the wealthy and powerful who began to support Cogniscience and fund further Awakened research. The faith's central tenet was that humanity's expansion into space was not only necessary for survival but also a divine imperative, aligning with the concept of Divine Observation.

Cogniscience taught that sapient beings were mirrors through which God observed the universe. Souls were described as complex, multidimensional, crystalline structures. Upon death, enlightened souls merged with God, experiencing eternal bliss as part of a collective divine consciousness. Souls that failed to reach enlightenment faced dissolution, with their essence recycled into new, unconnected souls. This doctrine tied into the idea of quantum observation—that the universe required sentient beings to observe it, solidifying its existence in a perfected "gem-like" state. In the beginning, God observed the compact universe entirely, but as it expanded, God needed sapient beings to continue this divine act of observation.

Awakened animals were integral to this belief, seen as divinely inspired creations that broadened God's observational reach. The process of Awakening, which granted animals enhanced intelligence and, according to doctrine, a soul, was considered a sacred act. In contrast, machines, regardless of complexity, were deemed soulless due to their artificial origin. The church emphasized space travel as a divine mission, promoting exploration and discovery as holy pursuits that enriched God's understanding. Each scientific breakthrough and exploratory mission was viewed as an extension of humanity's role as divine observers, contributing to the sacred process of understanding creation.

The faithful believe that space travelers hold a special status in God's plan. However, opinions vary on those who undergo suspended animation during long journeys. Some sects regard sleepers as "The Innocent", individuals whose long sleep



purifies them of past sins, granting them a second chance at virtue upon awakening. Other sects suggest that such sleep allows God to impart subconscious wisdom directly to the sleeper, a belief that doesn't always resonate with the sleepers themselves. The church promotes industriousness, inquiry, and service as essential virtues, viewing idleness and wasted potential as sins.

Cogniscience plays a significant role in governance on many worlds, promoting education and social welfare. However, close alliances with ruling elites sometimes lead to criticism, especially when the church's influence reinforces existing power structures. The Celestials, former believers who have turned away from Cogniscience, are viewed with suspicion and disdain. They are often seen as either damned souls or heretics, having rejected the divine truth. Some opponents of the church speculate that the Celestials discovered hidden knowledge that caused them to abandon the faith, a claim the church vehemently denies.

Changelings—beings known for their mutable nature—are perceived in various ways. Some sects believe Changelings can be redeemed and serve God like the Awakened, while others view them as soulless constructs incapable of salvation. The Elohim, by contrast, are revered as exemplars who have reached a state of living nirvana, embodying the perfect observer in harmony with God's will. Some believe the Elohim are Celestials who have embraced divine enlightenment, and that they serve as a model for what humanity should aspire to become.

At its core, Cogniscience is driven by the belief that humanity's purpose is to observe, understand, and ultimately merge with God through divine enlightenment. This commitment to exploration and scientific advancement strengthened the religion's influence when humanity first reached for the stars. The faith's promise of eternal unity with the divine and its vision of the universe as a reflection of God makes it a powerful force in shaping humanity's path forward.

HUMAN COSMOS

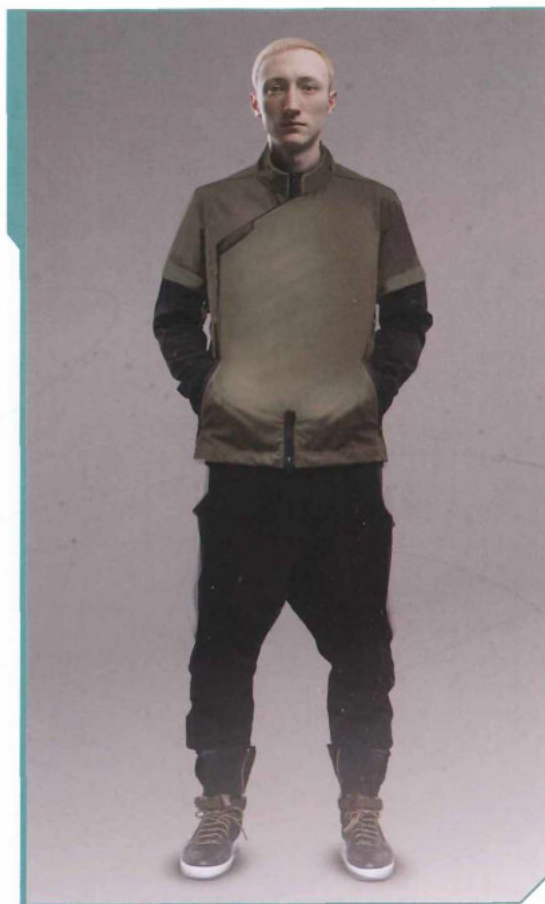
Human Cosmos is a reproductionist-expansionist ideology, whose adherents believe that humans should populate every habitable planet in the universe.

It was founded by the Jewish-Russian scientist and historian, Naomi Lidon. As an avid historiographer of the Cold War era in the 20th century, Naomi had a keen interest in the space race between the global superpowers of the time and in particular the Soviet Union's Venera program. She wondered why the Soviets continued expensive missions to Venus for two decades after learning that the planet was a hellhole with an atmosphere 100 times the pressure of Earth. What she discovered in discarded Soviet era documents led to her founding the Human Cosmos.

According to Naomi, the renowned 20th century scientist, Leonid Ksanfomality, had indeed found signs of civilization on Venus from photos taken during the Venera 13 probe and had only been discredited by fellow scientists due to a desire to keep the information in Soviet hands. No one disputes that the images of what looks like writing on metallic shards were authentic; however, most of the scientific community chalked it up to wishful thinking made possible due to the poor resolution. However, in a time when Earth's ecosystem was collapsing, many people who were looking for answers found that Naomi's message rung true.

Naomi claimed to have a vision when she discovered the Venera 13 photos. A vision that gave her insight into the first book of the Bible: Genesis. In her vision, Noah's Ark was a ship built to escape Venus once the human civilization had polluted the atmosphere such that it had collapsed into a runaway greenhouse effect. God's words to Adam had been "be fruitful and multiply", but his descendant's sins had made that impossible on Venus. Despite being given a second chance on Earth, humanity had once again ruined a world. There would not be another chance and thus began the great project known as the Seedbearer Fleet.

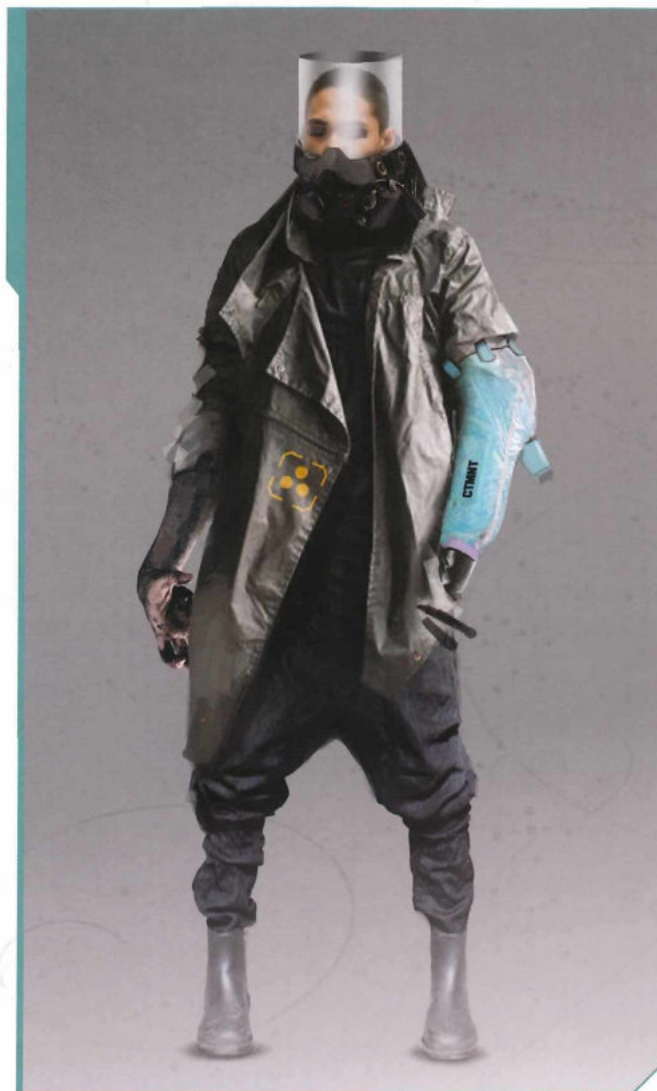
The Seedbearer Fleet was launched by Alexandria Nuong Lidon, the Grand Celebrant of the Human Cosmos movement when it was at its apex. There were seventy arkships in Alexandria's fleet, making it one of the largest to set out from Sol. Each one had a crew of seven thousand adherents and carried a further hundred thousand embryos in stasis wombs. The Seedbearer fleet eventually received the Green Worlds signal, and turned round, flying to the Centauri Cluster, arriving in the Present Era. The fleet broke into many smaller fleets to settle on as many worlds as possible. This was to help fulfill their founding principal: "On Every World, We Will Thrive".



APPENDIX B: HUMAN NPCS

HUMAN NPCS

Use the stat blocks presented in this appendix to populate custom adventures with more commonly encountered types of opponents or modify them to create unique NPCs.



AUGMENTED THUG

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 15 (Basic Scav) **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 49 (9d8 + 9)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2 +2	DEX	16	+3 +5	CON	12	+1 +3
INT	11	+0 +0	WIS	11	+0 +0	CHA	12	+1 +1

Skills Stealth +5, Streetwise +2
Senses Passive Perception 10
Languages Standard
CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug makes two attacks, using Blade or Armgun in any combination.

Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) Slashing damage.

Armgun. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, range 50/150 ft. *Hit:* 10 (3d4 + 3) Piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) Bludgeoning damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Scream Grenade (Recharge 5–6). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC 12, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point the thug can see within 60 feet. *Failure:* 10 (3d6) Sonic damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the start of the thug's next turn. *Success:* Half damage only.



CATAPHRACT

LARGE HUMAN [MECH]

AC 16 (Assault Mech) **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 97 (13d10 + 26)
Speed 40 ft.

	MOD		SAVE		MOD		SAVE		MOD		SAVE
STR	14	+2	+2	DEX	15	+2	+2	CON	15	+2	+2
INT	14	+2	+4	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Piloting +4
Vulnerabilities Electrical
Senses Passive Perception 10
Languages Standard
CR 4 (XP 1,100; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cataphract makes two Power Fist attacks.

Power Fist. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 12 (3d6 + 2) Bludgeoning damage.

Mech Rifle. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 13 (2d10 + 2) Piercing damage.

Arm Rocket (Recharge 5–6). *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 25/50 ft. *Hit:* 20 (4d8 + 2) Heat damage. Creatures within 5 feet of the target take half of the damage dealt.

CATAPHRACT [RONIN]

LARGE HUMAN [MECH]

AC 17 (Assault Mech) **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 142 (19d10 + 38)
Speed 40 ft.

	MOD		SAVE		MOD		SAVE		MOD		SAVE
STR	18	+4	+4	DEX	16	+3	+3	CON	15	+2	+2
INT	14	+2	+5	WIS	14	+2	+5	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Piloting +6
Vulnerabilities Electrical
Senses Passive Perception 12
Languages Standard
CR 8 (XP 3,900; PB +3)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cataphract makes three attacks, using Powerblade or Mech Rifle in any combination.

Powerblade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) Slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) Electrical damage.

Mech Rifle. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) Piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Reposition. The cataphract takes the Disengage action.



CIVILIAN

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 10 **Initiative** +0 (10)
HP 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	10	+0 +0	DEX	10	+0 +0	CON	12	+1 +1
INT	11	+0 +0	WIS	10	+0 +0	CHA	11	+0 +0

Senses Passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Standard)
CR 1/8 (XP 25; PB +2)

TRAITS

Educated. The civilian has proficiency with two skills or Expertise in one skill.

ACTIONS

Punch. Melee Attack Roll: +2, reach 5 ft. Hit: 1 Bludgeoning damage.



DANIEL HAHN



DAEMON

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 17 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 120 (16d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	18	+4 +4	DEX	12	+1 +1	CON	16	+3 +3
INT	12	+1 +1	WIS	14	+2 +2	CHA	8	-1 -1

Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing
Senses Passive Perception 12
Languages Standard
CR 6 (XP 2,300; PB +3)

ACTIONS

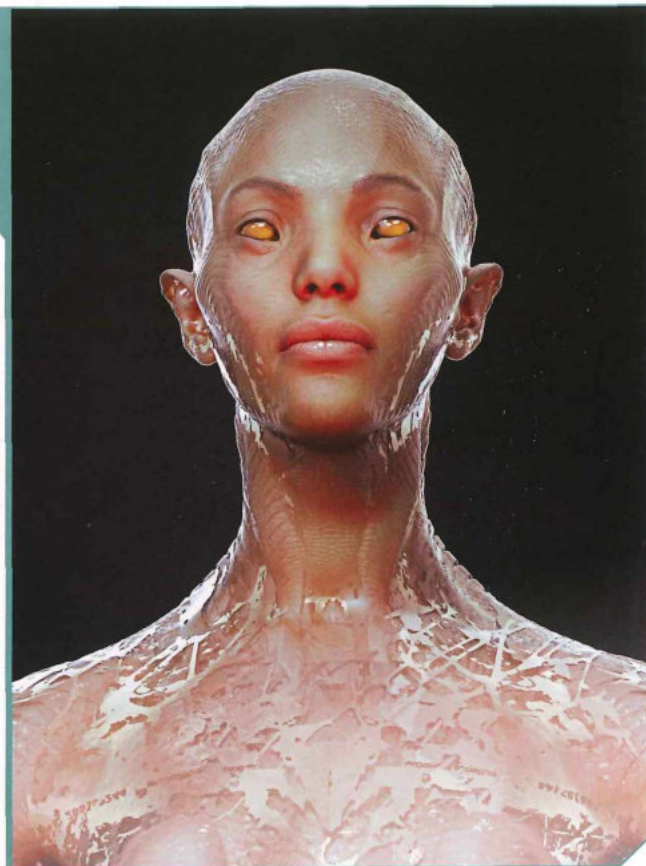
Multiattack. The daemon makes two Powerblade attacks.

Powerblade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +7, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) Slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) Electrical damage.

Security Handgun. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 1) Piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Kinetic Backlash (2/Day). *Trigger:* A creature within 10 feet that the daemon can see hits it with an attack roll. *Response:* The triggering creature takes Bludgeoning damage equal to the damage the daemon took from attack.



DAEMON NEOPHYTE

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 15 **Initiative** +1 (11)
HP 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3 +3	DEX	12	+1 +1	CON	15	+2 +2
INT	10	+0 +0	WIS	12	+1 +1	CHA	6	-2 -2

Senses Passive Perception 11
Languages Standard
CR 3 (XP 700; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The daemon makes two Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) Slashing damage.

Silicate Lash. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) Slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Disrupt. *Trigger:* A creature that the daemon can see targets the daemon with a ranged attack within 15 feet. *Response:* The daemon lashes out with Silicate tentacles and the target has Disadvantage on the attack roll.



ENFORCER

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2	+2	DEX	15	+2	+4	CON	12	+1	+1
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	10	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Streetwise +2
Senses Passive Perception 10
Languages Standard
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The enforcer makes two attacks, using Truncheon or Pistol in any combination.

Truncheon. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) Bludgeoning damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 100/300 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) Piercing damage.



ENGINEER

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 14 (Basic Scav) **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 32 (5d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	10	+0	+0	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	16	+3	+5	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Electronics +7, Insight +3, Mechanics +5
Senses Darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 11
Languages Standard plus one other language
CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

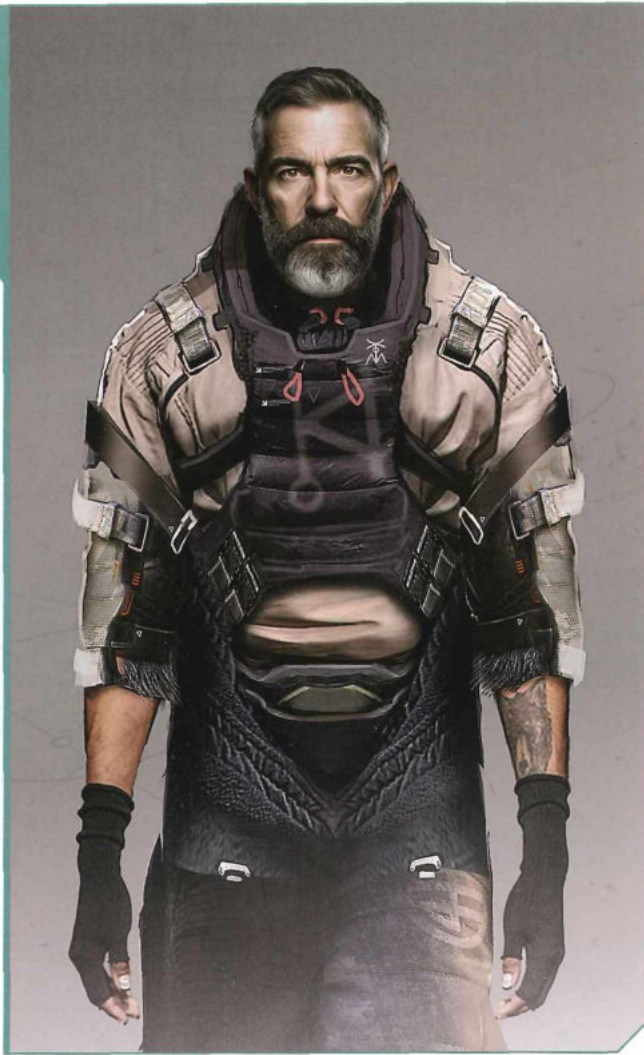
TRAITS

Educated. The engineer has proficiency with two skills and Expertise in two skills.

ACTIONS

Arc Welder. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) Heat damage.

Hack. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 14, one Construct within 10 feet of the engineer that the engineer can see. *Failure:* The target is hacked. Each turn the engineer can use a Bonus Action to make the target obey a command. Otherwise, the target takes no actions. At the end of each of the target's turns, if it succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw it regains control and is no longer hacked.



INFLUENCER

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 11 **Initiative** +1 (11)

HP 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

	MOD SAVE			MOD SAVE			MOD SAVE	
STR 10	+0	+0	DEX 12	+1	+1	CON 12	+1	+1
INT 14	+2	+2	WIS 12	+1	+1	CHA 16	+3	+3

Skills Deception +5, Insight +3, Persuasion +5

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Standard)

CR 1/4 (XP 50; PB +2)

TRAITS

Educated. The influencer has proficiency with two skills and Expertise in one skill.

ACTIONS

Powerblade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) Slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) Electrical damage.





MERCENARY

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 17 (Bioskin)

Initiative +1 (11)

HP 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	17	+3	+3	DEX	13	+1	+3	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	12	+1	+1	CHA	11	+0	+0

Skills Streetwise +3

Resistances Acid, Cold, Heat, Radiation

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Standard

CR 2 (XP 450; PB +2)

TRAITS

Sealed. The mercenary takes no damage from a high-pressure environment and as long as their suit functions they won't run out of oxygen.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mercenary makes two attacks, using Powerblade or Heavy Repeater in any combination.

Powerblade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) Slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) Electrical damage.

Heavy Repeater. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +3, range 100/200 ft. *Hit:* 12 (2d10 + 1) Piercing damage.



DANIEL HAHN



POLICE OFFICER

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)

HP 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

		MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE			MOD	SAVE
STR	13	+1	+1	DEX	14	+2	+2	CON	14	+2	+2
INT	10	+0	+0	WIS	11	+0	+0	CHA	10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +2, Piloting +4

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Standard

CR 1/4 (XP 50; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Baton. *Melee Attack Roll:* +3, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) Bludgeoning damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 100/300 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) Piercing damage.



RIOT OFFICER

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 14 (Basic Scav) **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 26 (4d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	14	+2 +2	DEX	14	+2 +2	CON	14	+2 +2
INT	10	+0 +0	WIS	11	+0 +0	CHA	10	+0 +0

Skills Perception +2, Piloting +4
Senses Passive Perception 12
Languages Standard
CR 1/2 (XP 100; PB +2)

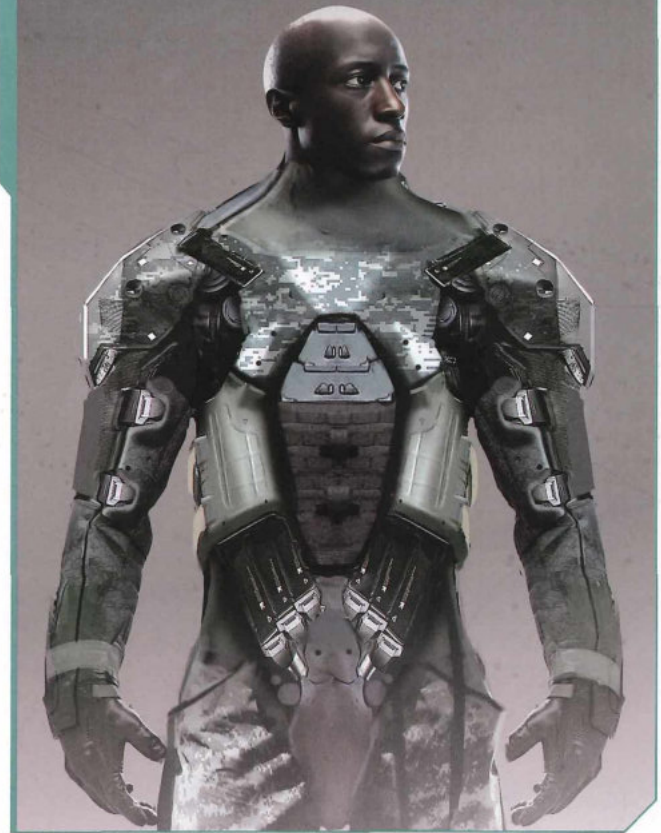
ACTIONS

Baton. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) Bludgeoning damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 100/300 ft. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) Piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Riot Shield. *Trigger:* The officer is hit by an attack roll. *Response:* The officer raises their riot shield, and adds 4 to their AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.



SOLDIER

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 14 (Basic Scav) **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	16	+3 +3	DEX	15	+2 +4	CON	13	+1 +1
INT	13	+1 +1	WIS	14	+2 +2	CHA	13	+1 +1

Skills Athletics +5, Medicine +4
Senses Passive Perception 12
Languages Imperial, Standard
CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Pummel. *Melee Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) Bludgeoning damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 20/200 ft. *Hit:* 16 (4d6 + 2) Piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Deflecting Strike. *Trigger:* The soldier is attacked by a creature within 5 feet using a weapon that does Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing damage. *Response:* The triggering creature takes 3 damage with a damage type equal to the triggering damage type.



STREET THUG

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 12 **Initiative** +2 (12)
HP 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	11	+0 +0	DEX	14	+2 +2	CON	12	+1 +1
INT	10	+0 +0	WIS	10	+0 +0	CHA	10	+0 +0

Senses Passive Perception 10
Languages Standard
CR 1/4 (XP 50; PB +2)

ACTIONS

Blade. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4, reach 5 ft. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) Slashing damage.

Handgun. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +4, range 40/80 ft. *Hit:* 9 (3d4 + 2) Piercing damage.



VR JUNKIE

MEDIUM HUMAN

AC 13 **Initiative** +3 (13)
HP 35 (10d8 - 10)
Speed 20 ft.

	MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE		MOD	SAVE
STR	9	-1 -1	DEX	16	+3 +3	CON	9	-1 -1
INT	15	+2 +2	WIS	14	+2 +2	CHA	12	+1 +1

Skills Deception +3, Electronics +6, Mechanics +4, Persuasion +3

Resistances Electrical

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Standard

CR 1 (XP 200; PB +2)

TRAITS

VR Devotion. The junkie has Advantage on saving throws against having the Dominated or Frightened conditions.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The junkie makes two Jolt attacks.

Jolt. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +5, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) Electrical damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Interference. *Intelligence Saving Throw:* DC 12, each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on a point the junkie can see within 90 feet of itself. *Failure:* The target has Disadvantage on attacks against the junkie for 1 minute.

APPENDIX C: CREATURE LISTS

This appendix contains lists of Exodus creatures from this book organized by creature type and Challenge Rating.

CREATURES BY TYPE

The following list organizes the creature stat blocks by creature type.

BEAST

Awakened Bear
Awakened Boar
Awakened Canine
Awakened Cat
Awakened Dolphin
Awakened Octopus
Awakened Raven
Bug Library
Crawler
Imperial Hyena
Imperial Lion
Imperial Tiger
Kay
Mimic Swarm

CELESTIAL

Deva
Imperial Knight
Keledai Asynjur
Keledai
Mara Yama Assassin
Mara Yama Brute
Mara Yama Warrior

CHANGELING

Arkavir Prole
Arkavir
Gath
Gyand
Gyand Warlord
Holosiem
Icarian
Itinkasi
Jackal (Koven)
Kinesect
Lobo (Koven)
Luciforge
Malabracht
Mature Vael
Minute Vassal (Koven)
Moaksha
Monyet
Ovar Carrier
Rexxana Female
Rexxana Male
Risitch
Risitch Berserker
Vassal (Koven)
Welcome Warrior (Koven)

CONSTRUCT

Ascendancy Drone Soldier
Ascendancy Mantis
Ascendancy Predator
Ascendancy Sentinel
Crown Android
Diplomacy Android
Ghost Blade
Ghost Creeper
Ghost Familiar
Ghost Maw
Ghost Revenant
Ghost Scout
Ghost Sentry
Ghost Soldier
Ghost Specter
Ghost Titan
Giant Hedron
Security Android

HUMAN

Augmented Thug
Cataphract
Cataphract (Ronin)
Civilian
Daemon
Daemon Neophyte
Enforcer
Engineer
Influencer
Mercenary
Police Officer
Riot Officer
Soldier
Street Thug
VR Junkie

CREATURES BY CHALLENGE RATING

The following list organizes the creature stat blocks by Challenge Rating.

CR 0

Ghost Familiar

CR 1/8

Civilian

Diplomacy Android

CR 1/4

Influencer

Kinesect

Minute Vassal (Koven)

Monyet

Police Officer

Street Thug

CR 1/2

Awakened Cat

Awakened Dolphin

Engineer

Gath

Ghost Soldier

Jackal (Koven)

Rexxana Male

Riot Officer

CR 1

Awakened Boar

Awakened Canine

Awakened Raven

Enforcer

Ghost Scout

Kay

Lobo (Koven)

Risitch

Security Android

Soldier

VR Junkie

CR 2

Arkavir

Augmented Thug

Awakened Octopus

Ghost Specter

Holosiem

Icarian

Mercenary

Moaksha

Risitch Berserker

Vassal (Koven)

CR 3

Arkavir Prole

Ascendancy Drone
Soldier

Awakened Bear

Daemon Neophyte

Ghost Sentry

Giant Hedron

Luciforge

Malabracht

CR 4

Ascendancy Predator

Bug Library

Cataphract

Ghost Blade

Ghost Creeper

Itinkasi

Mature Vael

Rexxana Female

CR 5

Ghost Revenant

Gyand

Keledai

CR 6

Crown Android

Daemon

Mimic Swarm

Ovar Carrier

CR 7

Ascendancy Sentinel

Imperial Hyena

Mara Yama Warrior

CR 8

Cataphract (Ronin)

Gyand Warlord

Imperial Tiger

CR 9

Ghost Maw

CR 10

Deva

Welcome Warrior
(Koven)

CR 11

Imperial Lion

CR 12

Imperial Knight

Mara Yama Assassin

CR 13

Ascendancy Mantis

Keledai Asynjur

CR 14

Mara Yama Brute

CR 15

Crawler

CR 19

Ghost Titan

APPENDIX D: REMNANT AND TECHNOLOGY LISTS

The following list shows what Remnants (relics or artifacts) lead to various technology breakthroughs. It also indicates when another technology is a prerequisite.

ANTIMATTER SOLAR FARM TECHNOLOGY

Consumption Armor
Logos

ASSEMBLY GLOVE TECHNOLOGY

Prerequisite: Limestone:
Basic technology

Ghost Gloves
Logos

BIOMINING TECHNOLOGY

Aerolite
Logos

CELESTIAL AUGMENT TECHNOLOGY

Logos
Merciless Oath
Ocular Wasp

CELESTIAL GEAR TECHNOLOGY

Bloody Lisa
Logos
Ocular Wasp

CELESTIAL WEAPONRY: GUNS TECHNOLOGY

Deconstructor
Grey Widower
Merciless Oath
Saint of the Ordnance
Workhorse

CELESTIAL WEAPONS: SPECIAL TECHNOLOGY

Bloody Lisa
Limestone Trebuchet
Surgeon's Mate

CELLULAR MORPH TECHNOLOGY

Auspex
Simulacrum Engine
Tectonic Seeds

CELLULAR REINCARNATION TECHNOLOGY

Logos
Simulacrum Engine
Surgeon's Mate

ENTROPY DRIVE TECHNOLOGY

Auspex
Relativistic Perditor
Slow Chair

EVOLVING INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGY

Ascetic Clamp
Consumption Armor
Grey Widower
Logos
Lupere's Mirror
Nightmare Factories
Relativistic Perditor
Saint of the Ordnance

HE3 DAEDALUS BALLOON TECHNOLOGY

Bug Plate
Flotight
Logos

IMMERSIVE SIMULATED REALITY TECHNOLOGY

Ascetic Clamp
Auspex
Ballkind
Escort
Logos
Lupere's Mirror
Nightmare Factories
Ocular Wasp
Retainer
Slow Chair

LIVESTONE: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Prerequisite: Livestone: Basic and Uranic Gene technology

Aerolite
Ghost Familiar
Lupere's Mirror
Nightmare Factories
Proto-Matter
Tectonic Seeds

LIVESTONE: BASIC TECHNOLOGY

Deconstructor
Ghost Familiar
Ghost Gloves
Livestone Trebuchet
Logos

MATTER/ANTIMATTER ANNIHILATION REACTOR TECHNOLOGY

Prerequisite: Antimatter Solar Farm technology

Relativistic Perditor
Tectonic Seeds

METALLOCERAMIC TECHNOLOGY

Ballkind
Consumption Armor
Escort
Logos
Proto-Matter
Retainer Armor
Shadow Pack

PHARMACEUTIC TATTOO TECHNOLOGY

Bloody Lisa
Escort
Maestro's Tattoo
Retainer

REACTION MASS TANK: HE3 TECHNOLOGY

Logos
Shadow Pack

RECLAIMER TECHNOLOGY

Nightmare Factories
Proto-Matter
Warp Field Generator

RECONSTRUCTIVE FOUNDRY TECHNOLOGY

Logos
Proto-Matter
Surgeon's Mate
Warp Field Generator

SILICATE MINING TECHNOLOGY

Surgeon's Mate

SPACE ELEVATOR TECHNOLOGY

Prerequisite: Metalloceramic technology

Bug Plate
Flotight
Logos
Shadow Pack

SPACE TOWER TECHNOLOGY

Prerequisite: Space Elevator technology

Consumption Armor
Logos

SUBLIMINAL PRIMER TECHNOLOGY

Ascetic Clamp
Auspex
Ballkind
Bloody Lisa
Escort
Logos
Merciless Oath
Ocular Wasp
Retainer
Saint of the Ordnance
Workhorse

TERRAFORMING TECHNOLOGY

Aerolite
Proto-Matter
Tectonic Seeds

TOKAMAK REACTOR TECHNOLOGY

Prerequisite: He3 Daedalus Balloon technology

Warp Field Generator

URANIC GENE TECHNOLOGY

Consumption Armor
Logos
Shadow Pack
Simulacrum Engine

GLOSSARY



Aegis Suits

Advanced Extravehicular and Ground Incursion Suit.

Arkship

These starships, powered by entropy drives, traveled from Earth to spread humankind across the Cluster.

Awakened

Early humans had already begun modifying animals to fulfill niche roles in Earth's deteriorating environment. Several of these species have developed even further and are an integral part of society.

Celestial

A catch-all term, that modern humans use to refer to the powerful beings they discovered when they arrived in the Cluster on their arkships.

Centauri Cluster

The center of the known universe.

Changeling

These creatures are the result of Celestial tinkering and are usually built to fulfill specialized roles, often in environments dangerous to their Celestial creators.

Construct

A generic term that applies to automated machines built by humans and the more powerful automatons created by Celestials, such as ghosts.

Constellation

An elaborate tattoo that Travelers use to store data and maps (and to hide such information from prying eyes).

Dominion

Humans describe Celestial territory and the shared beliefs and practices of a particular type of Celestial, as a Dominion.

Dynasty

An organization created by a Traveler to manage business on their homeworld while they are away on Exodus.

Elohim

These mysterious beings crafted the Gates of Heaven and the pathways these Gates connect. Celestials (and sometimes, humans) use these Gates to travel swiftly across the Cluster.

Exodus

Traveling across the stars comes with a price ... time. When humans leave their origin worlds behind to travel the Elohim's Pathways, they suffer the effects of time dilation. While only a few days might pass for the Traveler, years, even decades, pass for friends and families left behind.

Ghost

These Constructs were used in ancient Celestial civilizations and still defend abandoned ruins.

Roleplaying Game (RPG)

A roleplaying game, such as the EXODUS ROLEPLAYING GAME, is one in which each player's imagination, ingenuity, and use of the core rules, lets all players participate in a shared story.

Silicate

Nobody knows what ancient culture first created the Silicates (or if they were created at all). Some speculate that they might even be an alien parasite removed from an elaborate crystal ecosystem and forced to find a new method to act upon the universe. A method involving humankind.

Only the touch of humans can wake the symbiotic bond that merges flesh with crystal to create the composite being known as a Daemon.

Stat Block

A stat block contains the game statistics for a creature.

Traveler

Some humans understand that the only way to survive in the Cluster, is to find, decipher, and harness the advanced technologies (known as Remnants) left behind by long-past Celestial Dominions. They become Travelers, and many establish Dynasties on their origin worlds.





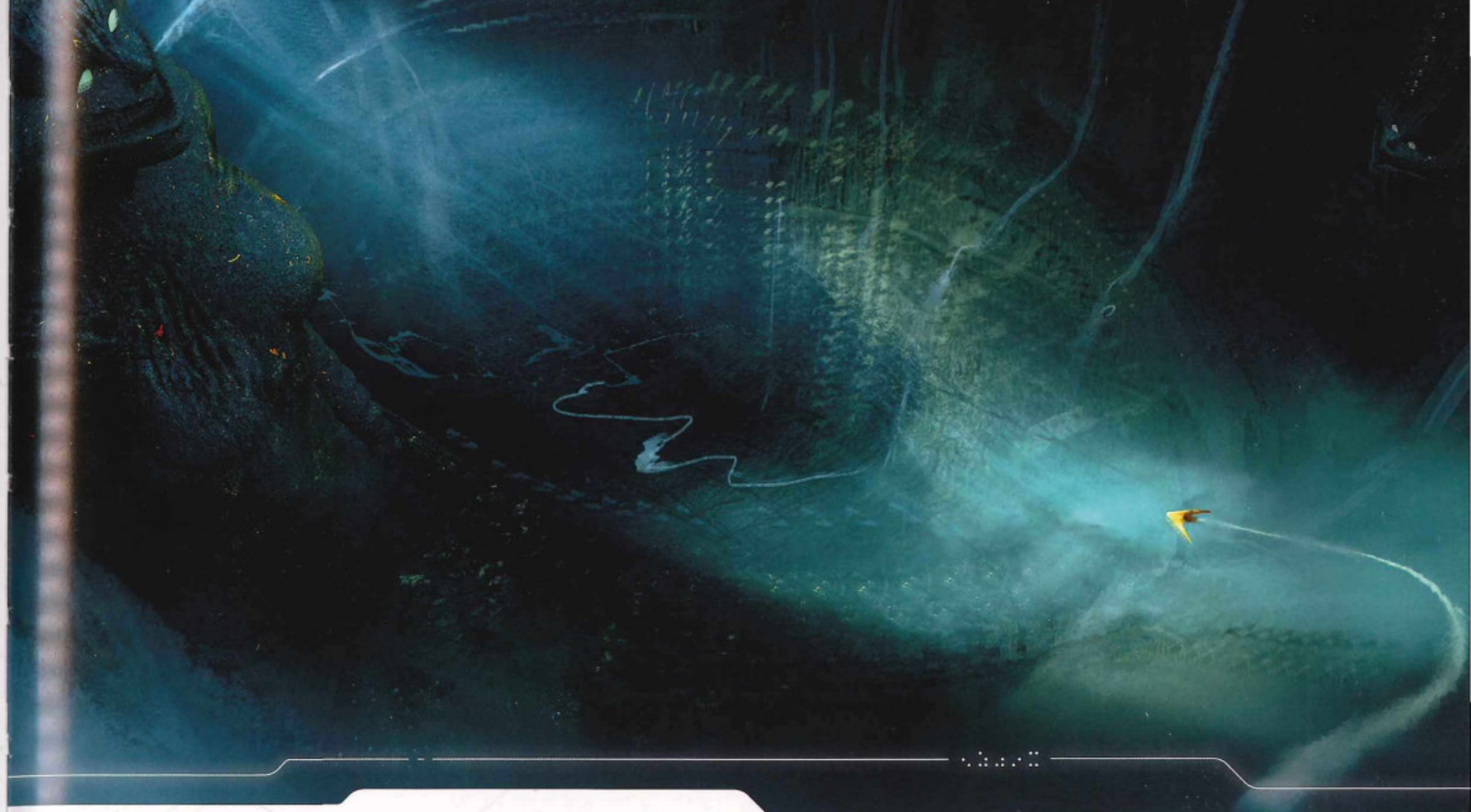


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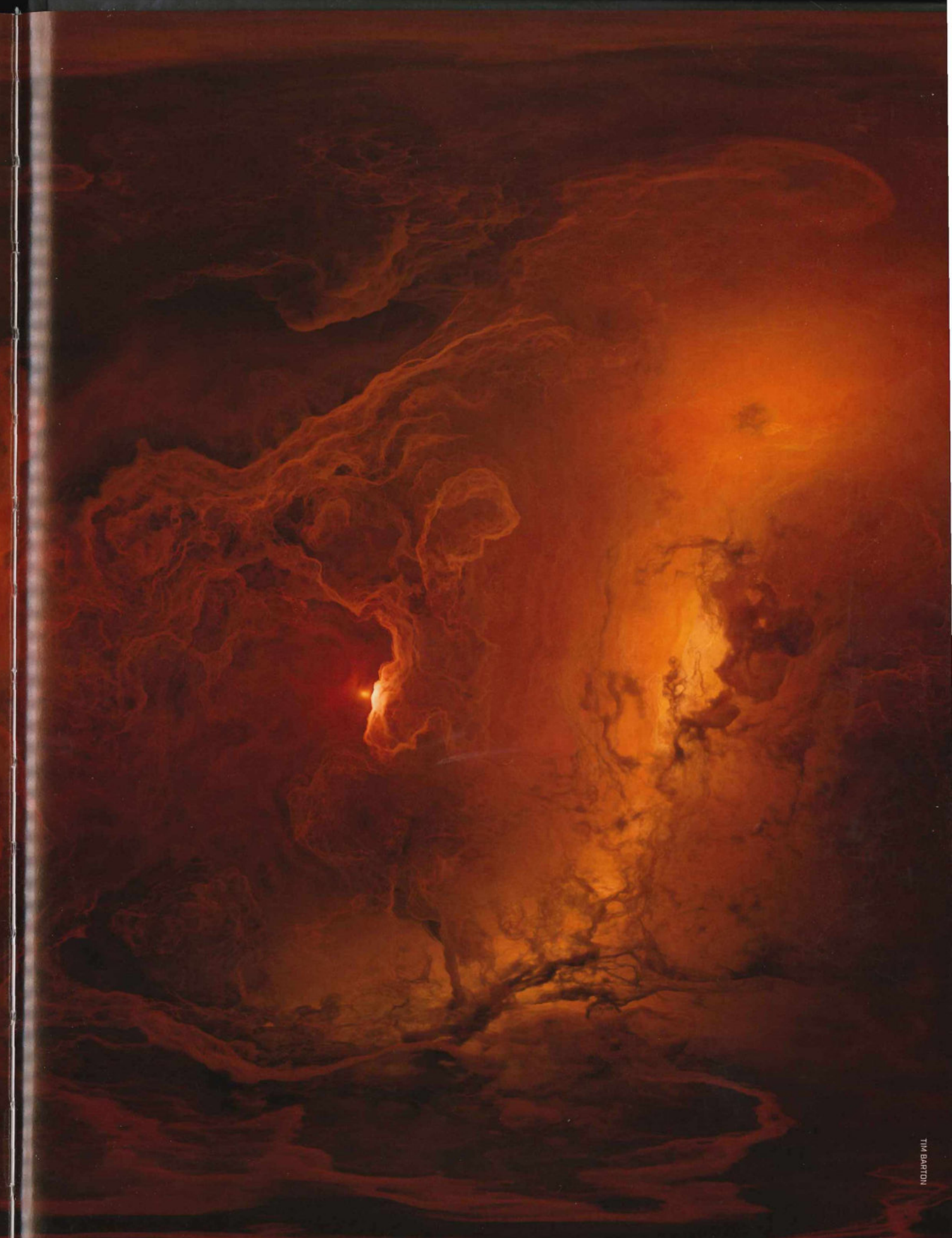
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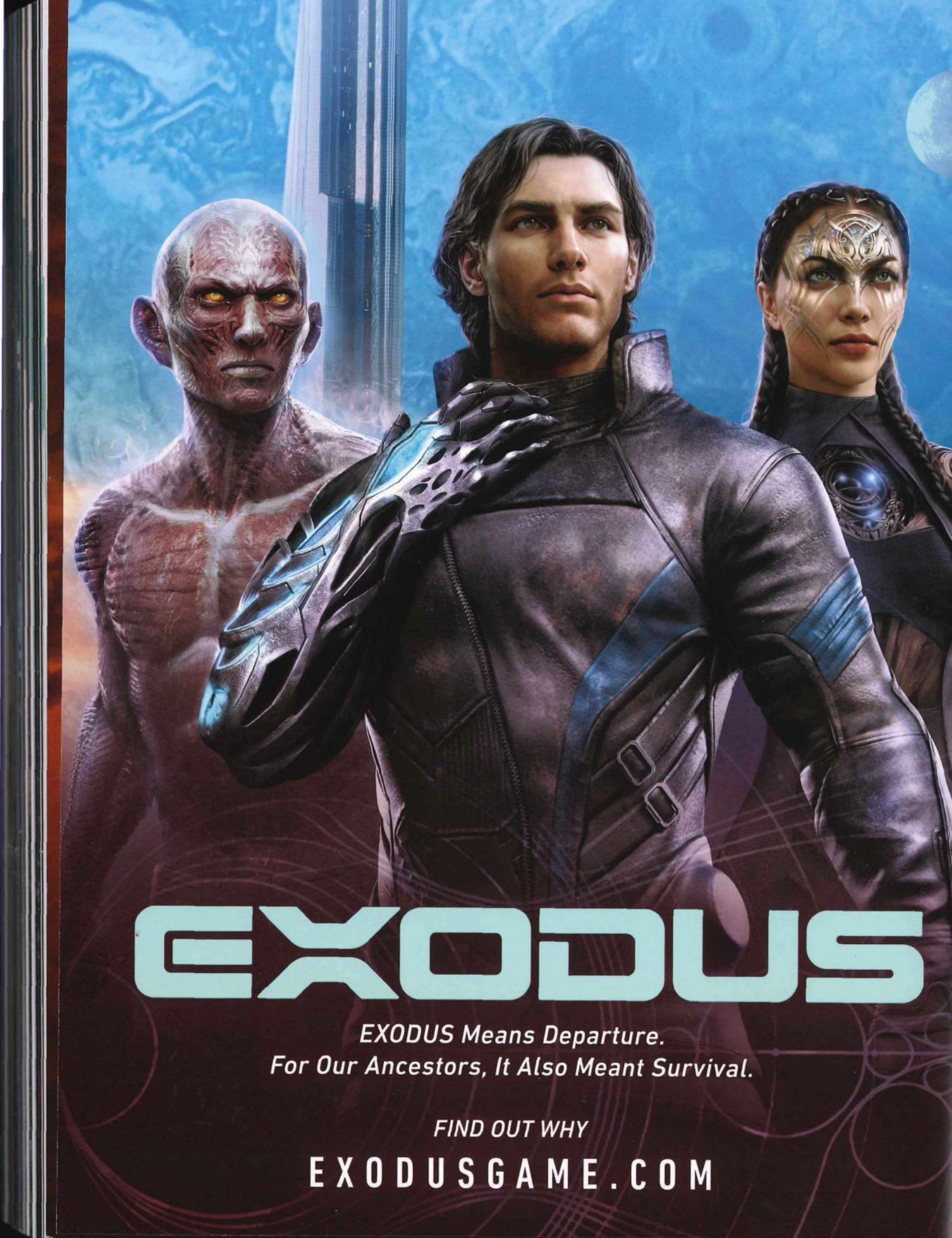
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